

The Homilist.



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# THE HOMILIST.

CONDUCTED BY THE

REV. DAVID THOMAS.

VOL. I.—Nos. 1 to 8.

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"I KNOW WELL I OUGHT NOT TO HAVE ANY DESIGN FOR MYSELF, WHICH ADMITS NOT OF SUBORDINATION TO THE INTEREST AND HONOUR OF THE GREAT GOD AND MY REDEEMER, AND WHICH IS NOT ACCUALLY SO SUBORDINATED."

JOHN HOWE.

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All the articles in the Volume are written by the Editor, with the exception of the three which have their Authors' names attached to them.

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# A HOMILY

ON THE

## Wants of the World, and the Weakness of the Church.

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“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation,” &c.—Matt. xvii. 14—21.

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THERE is a touching interest in this narrative. Every part glows and throbs with some deep passion of our common souls. It is a scene where opposite sympathies play their part with all the simplicity of nature, and the fascination of charm. Christ has just descended from the Mount of Transfiguration. The mystic circle perhaps still lingers around his person. Peter, James, and John, who on the quiet hill had witnessed the ecstatic vision, are at his side: they meet a turbulent multitude on the way, and the other disciples are in their midst. One of their number, a father, is the object of general notice and common sympathy. He has a son, the subject of a malady under whose paroxysms he foams and tears himself, seeking self-destruction by attempting to plunge sometimes into the fire, and sometimes into the water. The unhappy father bends his knee to Christ, and earnestly prays for help. The disciples had tried their power, and failed, and the scribes and Pharisees are exultant at their non-success. With their wonted uncharitableness and hate, they seize, perhaps, the failure as another opportunity to denounce them and their Master as impostors, and to turn upon them the contempt of the multitude. Christ reproves them in language

breathing the mingled feelings of indignation and tenderness. He orders the father to bring his lunatic son into his presence, and demands of him personal faith as the necessary condition of cure. The son appears; the condition is met; and the disease is forthwith removed. Humbled by their failure, the disciples approach Jesus apart from the multitude, and inquire why they could not cast him out. The significant reply is, "Because of your unbelief."

Such is the short but wonderful piece of history before us. It comes not within our plan to investigate the nature of the malady to which the young man was subject,\* nor to reconcile formal discrepancies, which the critical eye of a sceptical mind may discover between the histories of the different evangelists. All this would necessarily occupy considerable space, and draw the mind too far into the region of logic and letters for spiritual and practical ends. We select the narrative because of its aptitude to illustrate a subject which presses heavily on our hearts, and urgently claims the attention of all earnest men. That subject is, *The wants of the world, and the weakness of the Church*. In making this application of the scene before us, we would, at the outset, disclaim all sympathy with the practice of "spiritualizing" God's word—a practice which we regard as violating all acknowledged laws of interpretation—ministering to the most morbid sentiments of the human soul—spreading a mystic haze over the book of sublimest reason, and thus clouding the light of the world. All we do is, use the narrative as Jesus used the flowing wells, the fruitful vineyards, and the fields of waving corn—make it the organ through which to speak great truths to human hearts.

The first truth is, *that the world requires a great work from the Church*. It was no trivial request that the father of this raving demoniac made upon the disciples. To remove the enraging malady—or, if you will, to exorcise the furious fiend that had gained an absolute mastery over all the faculties

\* Let those who desire to go philosophically into the question study the thoughts of the great Neander on demoniacal possession, as given in his "Life of Christ."



and organs of his son, to restore him to physical health and mental sanity, and make his existence once more a blessing to himself and a comfort to his family—was a work warranting all the earnest solicitude which the father had displayed. But greater, far greater, than this is the work which the world requires of the Church. To say that the world is possessed of *devils*—that men are moral demoniacs—is not showy rhetoric, but solemn scripture. Judged by the everlasting laws of moral reason, the conduct of the world is as reckless and irrational as that of the miserable lunatic who foams and raves, and, in frantic madness, plunges into perils. The *moral* fiends that possess its soul, inspire its energies, and direct its movements, are conspicuously manifest. They are not like the “horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” on the mountains of Dothan, seen by none but the prophet—they are visible to all.

Let me mention two or three of the most potent and prominent of the evil spirits that possess society. There is *selfism*. This is a corruption of self-love—a principle prompting men to act ever from personal consideration—to make self the centre and circumference of all plans and operations. A selfish man is one who holds all interests cheap in comparison with his own; who receives readily but gives reluctantly, unless it be with the hope of the donation flowing back with interest to his own coffers. He views all questions in their aspect upon himself. “Loss and gain” are the fundamentals of his moral system. He weighs everlasting principles in the balance of lucre, and all is visionary and Utopian—chaff that tells not in the scales. The laborer may toil and sweat—the shopman wear away his health—the mariner hazard his existence—the warrior dye continents in blood, and tread empires in the dust;—compunction he has none, if results are favorable to his interests. Such is selfishness; and is it not the presiding genius of the world—the very mainspring of society—producing and perpetuating the motion of almost every wheel?

There, again, is *sensualism*. The apostle divides mankind into two classes—the “carnal” and the “spiritual.” The great

distinction between them in their relation to the body is this: the spiritual attends to fleshly appetites *as the necessities of his nature*, the carnal *as the sources of his pleasure*. If seeking pleasure from the senses is carnality, how fearfully prevalent is it! "Fleshly lusts," not spiritual impulses, move, mould, and master the bulk of the race. Esau's appetites governed his conscience—impelled him to barter away his birthright for a mess of pottage, and reduced him to beggary and tears. In his foolish conduct you have a picture of the world; in his wretched destiny you may read its doom. Amongst savage hordes, and in rural districts where education has not gone to wake the intellect to thought, and to touch the conscience into life, the reign of this power might have been expected; and there it is in its grossest forms and most disgusting aspects. But, lo! amidst civilized communities of men has it not a wide dominion? The luxurious in living, the gay in dress, the material in wealth, the animal in pleasure—where are these not coveted? where are they not sought? Sensualism is, verily, a mighty spirit amongst us. It plays a prominent part in the merchandise of the world. Art, in its highest forms, ministers to it: sculptor, painter, singer—the loftiest geniuses—stand waiting at its side, and move at its behest. It is the inspiration of theatres and the fascination of amusements. It is sung in taverns, and has its music in drawing-rooms. It is the chief element in the literature of the masses. It breathes in the ballad of the beggar, and is bound in the volume of the peer. It is the talk of the vulgar in the streets; it is the reading of *refined* ones in their quiet chamber, and, in the bright days of summer, on the beach. Will any keen observer of society pronounce this exaggeration, or hesitate to admit that it falls far beneath a full statement of the case?

There is also *scepticism*. I do not mean mere intellectual scepticism. God knows, this is fearfully spreading amongst us. We have all classes of infidels: there is the anti-theist, who declares there is no God; there is the anti-biblist, who admits a God, but denies the divinity of the Bible; there is the anti-supernaturalist, who admits the divinity of the Bible in the

same sense as he admits the divinity of any other true book, but who denies to it any supernatural feature; and there is the anti-propitiationalist, who professes to believe in the supernaturalness of the Bible, but denies the great doctrine of atonement. Intellectual infidelity in these various forms is working busily in our midst. It has its clubs, its platforms, and its press. Philosophy and poetry, logic and eloquence, are pressed into its service. It has the tongue of the orator and the ear of the populace. But it is not of this scepticism that I speak. I refer to something deeper, broader, and mightier far—the *spirit* of which all intellectual infidelities are the effects and forms—the soil from which they spring. The scepticism of the heart and life, which no *argument* can meet, is the evil demon which oppresses me. Does not this spirit possess men? Where is the faith of the heart? I see this spiritual scepticism everywhere; not merely in the manners of the millions who sail down your rivers, travel your railroads, saunter through your streets, crowd your taverns, and perambulate your parks on the holy day of God, but in your cathedrals, your churches, and your chapels, with heartless apathy repeating its *beliefs*, muttering its prayers, and singing its psalms. It haunts our temples, it kneels in pews, and speaks from altars. “Verily, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.”

There is, finally, *superstition*. The strongest native element in the soul is the religious. In the right development of this element is man’s well-being—in its perversion is his ruin. When it is clouded with ignorance, and inspired with fear; when it bows at the shrine of a false deity, and worships through the intervention of priests; when it moves by blind impulse rather than by enlightened conviction, it becomes superstition: and superstition has ever been, and still is, a mighty spirit of evil in our world; it reigns with an undisputed sway over the vast domain of heathenism, and is the empress of more than one-half of professing Christendom.

These are some of the chief spirits that possess society. How much of the phenomena of the general history of the



world are traceable to them! The unrighteous tricks of business—the graspings of cupidity—the oppressions and woes of indigence—the blasphemous speculations of philosophy—the tyrannies of governments—the horrors of war—the absurdities of religion,—all spring from these spirits as streams from the fountain, as plants from the soil.

Now, the work which the world requires of the Church is to *cast out these spirits*—nothing less than this. The breaking up of its heterodoxical system, or the removal of its oppressive institutions will not meet the case. Unless you eject these spirits they will create systems as erroneous as ever, and build up institutions as oppressive as before. What are “doctrinal errors” but head-fumes rising out of their hidden fire? And, as to outward institutions, rear churches and chapels on the ruins of operas, gin-palaces, and other public scenes of sin, and what have you done? These spirits can work as much vileness and moral devastation through a temple as a theatre. “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything.”

The second truth the narrative serves to illustrate is, *that the Church has signally failed to do the work required.* The disciples did not more signally fail in healing the lunatic than the Church has in meeting the exigencies of the world. That the world is better in some respects through the agency of the Church, admits of no question. Knowledge has been increased, and inventive genius has been developed; the social heart has been genialized, and public manners have been improved. Evils that once pressed as an incubus on the upheaving energies of mankind are buried in the grave of the past. The rights of man are recognised, and greatly multiplied are both the comforts of life and the facilities for future advancement. But looking at humanity in the full breadth of its nature, and the infinitude of its relations, we are bound to regard this as falling unspeakably short of the demands of its condition. Whilst we adopt not the sentiment of the French writer, who degrades civilized life by representing it as no better than barbarism, we cannot lose sight of the fact,

developed not only in ancient history, but everywhere palpable in the life of modern Europe, that the lowest degree of moral corruption may co-exist with the highest point of material civilization. The arts may advance, and the intellect may rise where the *soul*—the man—is sinking all the while. The question we have to decide, in order to determine the failure of the Church, is, *Are the evil spirits expelled?* This is its work : if it has not done this it has done nothing to the purpose. Is the world less selfish, less sensual, less sceptical now than it was eighteen hundred years ago? We need not ask, is it less superstitious, for the settlement of that question would prove nothing. Mere secular knowledge will decrease superstition, and often its expulsion makes way for scepticism ; one demon departs to make room for another. Some maintain that there is not at this hour a larger number of Christians, in proportion to the population of the world, than existed at the close of the first century of our Lord—that Christians are not relatively more numerous now than they were then. The supposition is astounding. But we need not go thus far for evidence. Is it true that two-thirds of the earth's inhabitants are in pagan darkness, and that the vast majority of the other third is made up of Mohammedans, Jews, infidels, worldlings, and nominal Christians? Is it true that, even in christian England, the Church is making no aggression on the world? that conversions are not as numerous as births? Is it true that, even in the vicinities of churches and chapels, the bulk of the neighbourhood are entirely indifferent to religious ordinance? Is it true that the working men of England, comprehending a large proportion of the mind and muscle of the age, are scarcely touched by its influence? The affirmative of either of these questions is sufficient to show that the Church has signally failed in her great work.

There are two thoughts which are sufficient to overwhelm a serious mind with the solemnity of this failure :—First. *That the work neglected is of the most incomparable importance.* The sublimest discoveries of science—the grandest achievements that patriotism or philanthropy ever realized, are pueril-

ities to it. So long as the world is under either of these spirits, real prosperity and true happiness are *eternally* impossible. Can that soul whose relations are infinite, and whose sympathies were intended to flow forth like the light, encompassing the wide world with its beams, ever reach its well-being under the master-sway of *selfishness*? Impossible! This, like a demon, imprisons the faculties, deadens the moral susceptibilities, seals up the fountain of spiritual life, and separates the spirit from the infinite source of love and order. As the plant never reaches its perfection, but as it yields itself up to the free influence of nature, throws out its odour on every breeze, and spreads forth its beauty to every eye, so the human soul can only realize the full development of its powers as it yields itself up to universal love, and gives out its properties to the good of the great system to which it belongs. Or can man ever advance to true greatness and peace under the dominion of *sensualism*? Does not all history show what is taught alike by philosophy and the Bible, "that fleshly lusts war against the soul?"—that they are *necessarily* incompatible with its purity, peace, freedom, and force? Did not the great Apostle feel that the keeping under of his body was indispensable to the salvation of his soul? Is *scepticism* consonant with the true interests of humanity? Does it not strike at the root of all virtue, and destroy every motive to spiritual culture? In the nature of things, can there be any spiritual life, growth, or peace, where the *idea* of God is not felt as the greatest reality of consciousness? A moral soul without this idea is a planet without a sun—in darkness, disorder, and death. Nor is *superstition* less unfavorable to the real progress of mankind: it is a cloud upon the sun—a miasma in the social air. It is a fiend that dethrones reason, perverts conscience, and stimulates to arrogant assumptions and heartless cruelties. Every page of its history is an exposition of the text: "Their sorrow shall be multiplied that hasten after another god." Thus, then, the world is necessarily lost so long as these spirits are in the ascendant. It requires no divine interposition to conduct it to misery; it is on its road, and these



“devils and their angels” are getting strength to torment it day and night. Oh! until these demons are expelled—until selfishness gives way to benevolence—sensualism to spirituality—scepticism to faith—superstition to religion,—humanity, from the everlasting laws of its nature, is doomed to ruin. It can no more enjoy life and rise to ultimate greatness than the poor lunatic in the text. It will be foaming eternally under some new passion, and plunging itself “into the fire, and oft into the water” of destruction.

Secondly. The other thought which gives deep solemnity to this failure is, *That there is no other body on earth that can do the work.* Christ constituted the Church the moral exorcist; gave it the gospel as the infallible implement, and said, “Cast out devils.” In the first days she nobly fulfilled her mission: she spoke, and the demons fled. The sensualism of voluptuous Corinth—the scepticism of philosophic Greece—the selfishness of the narrow-minded Jew—and the superstition of the dreamy Pagan, scared off at the majesty of her voice. But now these spirits sport at her side—haunt her very altars—play about her heart. I am told that the Church is fast sinking into contempt amongst the common-sense, thinking men of the world. My heart is pained at the probability, but my judgment is not surprised. High pretensions, coupled with practical impotency, must naturally produce such a result. If the disciples declared their possession of miraculous power, and narrated the wonderful feats they had done, and the still greater works they could achieve, I can imagine the multitude naturally turning to them the sneering lip and the flashing eye of ridicule when they saw them fail in the attempt to cure this young man. But if *they* were exposed to contempt on this ground, how much more so are Christians! How lofty our pretensions! We talk about our commission to EVANGELIZE THE WORLD; we deign not to aim at anything less. We speak of our immense resources—the might of truth and the power of prayer—and our achievements are as miserable as our pretensions are sublime. The world laughs at our great swelling words and little doings, and well it may. We

are taunted, not trusted : reverence has given way to ridicule. What is to be done ? The world is full of moral demons, and we fail to cast them out.

The third truth is, *That the failure of the Church has arisen from the want of faith.* “Why could not we cast him out ? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief : for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” The general idea expressed in this bold, figurative language is, *that the smallest genuine faith is sufficient for the achievement of the greatest works.* The New Testament is filled with the two doctrines, that success in all human operations is from God, and that the success is ever dependent upon personal faith. It is with the latter that we have to do at present. One of the evangelists assures us that Christ could not do “many mighty works” in Nazareth, because of the unbelief of the people. Now, it seems to us that the making of personal faith a necessary condition of success is no arbitrary arrangement. *It is founded in the nature of things.* It is essential to preserve intact the principle of moral merit in human operations, and also to stimulate to that species of exercise which, in the nature of the case, is fitted to gain the result. In no department of action, secular or spiritual, could Christ do many mighty works for men if they have not FAITH. Unless the husbandman has sufficient enlightened and vigorous faith in the laws and advantages of agriculture to stimulate and guide him to the proper cultivation of his land, many mighty works of God will not be done in his fields. The statesman or sovereign who has not a noble faith in the everlasting principles of *right*, has no ground to expect that, through his legislation, God will do many mighty works for his country.

There are three things indispensable to human success in any department of labour—*means, method, and motive* : a suitable instrument, a proper way of using it, and a sufficient motive to prompt the necessary action. Now, our position is,

that, *without faith*, there can be neither of these in the great work of converting the world ; and that, therefore, unbelief is the cause of failure.

*Faith is necessary to the means.* What is the necessary instrument ? The ready and general answer will be, The gospel. We accept the reply ; but, for the sake of accuracy, ask in what *form* is the gospel the instrument ? Is it in the *book form* ? Would a correct verbal repetition of it answer the purpose ? If so, why a ministry ? The gospel written on the heavens, articulated in the winds, or circulated in tracts, would do. Is it in the *form of other men's thoughts* ? Will a faithful recital of the opinions and interpretations of the "old divines" realize the end ? The great principles of orthodoxy I hold with a tenacious grasp ; the memory of the great theologians of other times I venerate, and thank the Almighty Spirit for many of their quickening and guiding thoughts. But the *formal* repetition of them by their successors will never convert the world : God never intended any generation to act the part of a parrot. He has given mind to each. The intellectual labors of no one were intended to relieve its successor from the most earnest and indefatigable investigation of the great text-book of truth. On the contrary, they were to light them into farther deeps, and to accelerate their speed. In addition to this, so constitutionally dissimilar are the minds of men, that a proposition embodying a living conviction of one generation, would be little more than a dead dogma if *formally* uttered by another. What, then, is the instrument ? THE INDIVIDUALLY DIGESTED GOSPEL : the gospel whose evidence has been analyzed and approved by the individual reason—whose principles have been comprehended by the individual judgment—whose blessings have been appropriated to the individual experience—whose genius burns as the inspiration of the individual soul. This is the all-conquering form of the gospel. The man who speaks this, however untutored his mind or unclassic his tongue, will speak that which will be sound in philosophy, true in experience, and all-captivating in poetry.

He speaks because he believes; and speaks, therefore, not as an echo, but a living voice—speaks in the full might of his manhood. He who preaches the gospel in any other form is like David in Saul's armour; very splendid it may be, but ridiculous to the thoughtful eye, and powerless to strike one conquering blow.

Faith is also *necessary to the method*. In art, business, and philosophy, method is of primary moment. Without method there may be colour, canvas, and brush, but no painter—shop and capital, but no tradesman—a universe of facts and a vigorous soul, but no philosopher. In like manner, the gospel will achieve little without method. By method, of course we mean no prescribed or patent plan: the one word *LIVELY* will express our idea. Present it in the living logic of a mind inspired with its philosophy, to meet the world's *reason*—the living rectitude of a mind inspired with its goodness, to meet the world's *conscience*—the living religion of a mind inspired with its God, to meet the world's *soul*. See you not that the gospel presented in the *reasonable, righteous, and religious* talk of men thus inspired, would, as the summer's sun acts upon the morning mists, vanish them from the scene, and leave the landscape clear? Let the Church teach thus, and her doctrines will drop on the world as the rain, and her speech distil as the dew. But can there be such a method as this without individual faith?

Faith is, moreover, *necessary to the motive*. We may possess an instrument suited to a certain work, and be well acquainted with the proper way of using it, and yet do nothing, for the want of motive to stimulate to action. That nothing but faith can supply the requisite motive is too obvious to require illustration. Without faith in the soul—in its worth and lost condition—in the sufficiency of the atonement—in the aptitude of the gospel—in the availableness of the Spirit, and in the love of God, what can induce that consecration of earnest effort which the work demands?

From the considerations which we have, with the utmost



brevity, stated, does it not appear evident, that where there is not faith there must necessarily be a failure in the great work intrusted to the Church? Our faithlessness is our impotency.

“Lord, increase our faith.” Oh! for the faith that Elijah had, who, on Carmel’s brow, single-handed, confronted and confounded the heathens of his country;—or the faith that John the Baptist had, whose *voice* broke the moral slumbers of Judea, and roused the spirit of earnest inquiry amongst his countrymen; who, in a vacillating age, amidst men who bowed to circumstances as the “reeds” to the wind, stood as firm in principle as those hills around him, that threw their shadows on the bosom of the rolling Jordan;—or of Luther, before whose moral majesty all Europe stood in awe;—or of our own Whitfield, who, in alternate tones of love and thunder, and in tears of unutterable emotion, drew the folded veil of matter, and brought the spiritual world in contact with the souls of men.

Awake! awake! Put on thy strength of heroic faith, O Zion! Put on thy beautiful garments—garments wrought of celestial virtues—O Jerusalem, thou Holy City! Shake thyself from the dust of sensuous ritualism and technical faiths. Arise, and sit down in calm majesty on the sublime throne of moral principle, O Jerusalem! Loose thyself from the shackling bands of worldly policy, hereditary beliefs, priestly domination, and conventional piety, O captive daughter of Zion! Then shall the Gentiles see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name: thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God!

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## Gems of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Second.

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled.”—Isa. l. 10, 11.

#### SUBJECT:—*False and True in Character.*

*First.* The darkness of the True, and their relief: three general thoughts suggested:—

1. *The True have a distinctive principle and conduct.* All character is made up of *principles* and *acts*. The principle is “fear,” not of a crouching serf, but of a loving child—*filial reverence*; the conduct is obeying the voice of his servant—*Christ*. Here is the *true spirit* and its *true development*. Piety may listen to the voice of philosophies and priesthoods, but obeys the voice of Christ: *his whole life was a voice*.

2. *The True have their seasons of darkness*—“walketh in darkness.” Jacob, Job, Asaph, Jeremiah. The cloud is not spread by a divine hand over the heart, but rises from the corrupt elements of our moral nature. A dark day is not the sun’s fault; he shines in his own great orbit in November as in June; the darkness arises from the vapours of the earth. So with moral gloom—*cause not in God, but in us*.

3. *The True, in seasons of darkness, have a sure relief*—“they trust in the name of the Lord;” trust in two things—

in his *disposition* and *power* to help—*Christianity* a proof of the former, the *universe* of the latter.

*Secondly.* The lights of the False, and their ruin. “Walk in the light of your fire,” &c.

1. *The False have their lights.* These lights are such as *general custom—temporal expediency—corrupt religions—pseudo-philosophies.* These lights are their *guides* and *comforts* in their relation to both worlds.

2. *The False will have their ruin.* “This shall ye have at my hand.” The “candle of the wicked shall be put out.” All their lamps, however luminous, shall be quenched in a midnight, without a ray of moon or star.

Walk on with bold and manly step, ye God-loving and Christ-following men! Ye *true-hearted*! strike courageously in the battle of life. Dark clouds may sweep the changing sky, eclipse the upper lights, and spread their gloomy shadows over these lower scenes. These clouds shall break in blessings, and pass away. Heavenly orbs shall beam in brightness from the clearest azure, and “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold.” Wake up to thought, ye false ones, “that compass yourselves about with sparks.” These sparks may warm your sensuous nature, cheer your selfish hearts, and surround you with a dazzling lustre just now. Fools and sycophants may pronounce their radiations *glory*; but there is a moral tempest brooding that shall extinguish all. One after another thy stars shall fall from heaven like “untimely figs,” until, with the last effort of expiring hope, thou shalt lift thine head above for the last time, and see—what? not a ray to relieve the pitch blackness of a night that shall never end!

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## Analysis of Homily the Third.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”—Isa. lv. 2, 3.

The genius of this chapter is sufficient for three purposes:—  
 1st. To *silence infidelity*. Infidelity can reason triumphantly against the corruption of churches, the spirit of sects, and many of the interpretations of theologians; but we challenge it to argue against the *spirit* of the Bible; and this is what we contend for: we contend not for the forms which men have given the Bible, but for the *divine* things in it—the genius. We take an infidel into this chapter, and we make him speechless. He could no more reason against the *free*, universal, and divine love which breathes through every sentence, than he could against the elements of nature that animate, sustain, and bless his existence. 2nd. The genius of this chapter is sufficient to *shame bigotry*. The “dear people”—the “little flock”—the “favorite few,” who, with narrow views and selfish hearts, look upon all beyond the pale of their own little sect as *reprobate*, can scarcely fail to blush before the moral majesty of this chapter: the blessings are here like the waters that well from rocks, roll in rivers, and descend in showers, for all that THIRST. 3rd. The genius of this chapter is sufficient to *cheer penitence*; none need despair. The blessings are for all that thirst, and to be had “without money and without price.”

SUBJECT:—*The False and True in Pleasure.*

I. The False is expensive. All false pleasure is sought from one or other of the following sources—*sensual gratification, secular wealth, or popular fame*—each very expensive. They cost what is infinitely more precious than gold—*time, energy, moral peace, mental independency, and frequently health.*

II. The False is not sustaining: it is not "*bread*." Were it obtained, it would not strengthen. It does not give mental strength: sensuality enervates the intellect. The love of gain makes man a tactician, not a thinker. The breath of mammon is poison to a free intellect, and the love of fame fills the mind with the unhealthy sentiment of vanity; nor does it give *spiritual* strength—strength to resist temptation—to bear trials—to help humanity—to serve God—to face death. *It destroys this.*

III. The False is not satisfactory; "*satisfieth not*." Three things necessary to satisfy:—*It must be congenial*; the provision must suit the appetite—bread for hunger, water for thirst, &c.; *it must coincide with conscience*; and *it must promise permanence*. The idea of losing a pleasure will take away its enjoyment. The sources of false pleasure have neither of these conditions. They are not suited to spiritual appetites—not congruous with conscience—not lasting.

I. That True Pleasure consists in spiritual communications from God: "Hearken diligently unto me," &c. Three things implied in this language:—1st. That God has made spiritual communications to man. This is a fact. They are the *substance* of the Bible. 2nd. That man has a capacity to appreciate these communications. A wonderful argument this for the native dignity of the soul. 3rd. That to appreciate these communications requires the most diligent study. The Bible a difficult book, challenging the concentration of intellectual power.

II. That the pleasure thus derived is of the highest conceivable description; *essentially excellent*—"good;" *abundantly sufficient*—"delights itself in fatness;" *spiritually quickening*—"your soul shall live."

III. That the continuation of this, the highest pleasure, is guaranteed by the solemn assurance of God. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with you." Here is a pledge of its perpetuity. If a promise is not fulfilled, it must be for one of three reasons: either that the author was insincere



when it was made, or that he subsequently changed his mind, or lacked the necessary power to redeem the pledge. Neither of these suppositions are admissible; therefore, this true pleasure is everlasting.

Whither are you seeking pleasure? Beware of the False. Memory will one day turn its streams into "wormwood and gall," and conscience kindle its elements into flame. Seek the True. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God—the river of holy thoughts and sympathies, flowing from the INFINITE through Jesus Christ. In this great and holy stream, my brother, slake thy thirsty spirit, and live for ever.



#### Analysis of Homily the Fourth.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations."—Exod. xvi. 33.

Why transmit to future ages this manna? Two reasons might be assigned. 1st. Because God's doings have ever a *moral meaning*. All the acts of intelligent existences are the effects and expressions of some reason or reasons. The acts of the highest existences have the highest reasons: these reasons are the highest *truths*, and these truths are the necessary means of all spiritual improvement. God is the Highest of the high—infinately high: his acts, therefore, are ever the expressions of transcendent truths. His ordinary operations in nature are for the study of all: his extraordinary operations in the Bible are for the special study of *sinners*. 2nd. In their moral meaning all generations have a *common interest*. All possess an identity of nature, relation, and condition: all require, therefore, the same communications from God.

#### SUBJECT:—*Physical Providence.*

I. That God's physical providence recognises the personal wants of each individual: manna fell for each, babe and man—not one overlooked. If destitution were found in any tent,

it was either because the manna was not gathered in the morning ; or, if gathered, wasted ; or, if gathered and not wasted, taken away by the hand of avarice and injustice. The cause of destitution would not be with God. So now. *Poverty is not the institution of heaven.* Men are in squalor and indigence either because they do not gather, or because they are wasteful, or because they are robbed. *A priori* reasoning would suggest this—science and history prove it. The causes of poverty being with us, let us seek to remove them.

II. That the enjoyment of God's physical providence depends on trustful labour. Each man was to gather the manna for himself, and to gather no more than his portion for the day, trusting to Providence for the morrow. Physical blessings cannot be fully enjoyed without *labor* and *trust*. The former is indispensable to give them a relish and felt value, the latter to exclude all anxious thoughts about the future. Neither he who does not labor, nor he who labors with an anxiety for the future, can fully enjoy the manna of Providence. He who *gathers* for to-day and *trusts* for to-morrow is the happy man.

III. That an avaricious accumulation of the blessings of physical providence will disappoint the possessor. Some gathered more than their share, and it bred worms, and stank. Hoarded wealth never satisfies : it has neither the bloom nor the fragrance of that *freshness* which delights. It is *noisome—it generates moral reptiles.*

IV. That the seeking of the blessings of physical providence should never interfere with religious institutions. To prevent labor on the Sabbath, a double portion came on the sixth day. This suggests—1st. That religion does not require us to neglect the body. Fastings and mortifications are *irreligious* and *absurd*. 2nd. That religion has special claims. It has to do with man's spiritual *nature, relations, and interests*. Let the manna deposited in the golden vase—enshrined in the sacred chest—guarded by the Shekinah, and handed down through long ages, ever suggest the true theory of *God's physical providence*.

## The Genius of the Gospel.

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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### FIRST SECTION.—Matt. i. 1—17.

#### *The Genealogical Table\*—its Moral Suggestions.*

I. The solemn succession of the race. The representatives of forty generations appear before us, and pass away. One generation is buried in the dust of another: future generations will be entombed in our ashes. But though men depart, *man* remains. Generations, like waves, rise from our common nature, and break on the eternal shore; but, like the ocean, still on it rolls in undiminished plenitude and power. *The world can do without us.* This fact serves to *reprove worldliness*, and to *inculcate humility*. Death is the law and lot of all.

“Not to thy eternal resting-place,  
Shalt thou retire alone. \* \* \*

Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the ancient world, with kings,  
The powerful of the earth, the wise and good,  
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales,  
Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The venerable woods, rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks,  
That make the meadows green, and poured round all,  
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste—  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man.”

\* *Vide* Davidson on “Sacred Hermeneutics,” p. 589; also Davidson on “Biblical Criticism,” p. 371.

II. The physical connexion of the race. Each of these generations spring from the other, as grain from grain. Humanity, however numerous its generations, is one: it may have a myriad branches, but it is one tree, rising from one germ and ruled by one law. This unity, 1st, demands the spirit of brotherhood. How monstrous does the belligerent element appears in its presence! 2nd. It helps to explain the transmission of moral character. The tie of physical relationship which links men together is a stupendous instrument of moral influence—a vehicle through which moral ideas, dispositions, and habits, are transmitted from sire to son. 3rd. It enables each generation to help its successors. Because of this unity, we can understand the thoughts and reasonings of men who lived thousands of years ago; derive good from the writings of Moses, and David, and Paul. Though we have only a few years to live, we can work to bless posterity. *The heart of humanity is in us all, and to the heart of the last man we can speak.*

III. The moral differences of the race. In this list we recognise some men of distinguished goodness, and some pre-eminent for wickedness. This shows that, however potent the influence which generations can exert on each other, it is not *resistless* and absolute. There is a power lodged in each man's bosom to prevent the combined influence of all past generations from moulding his character. This power is the glory of his nature—connects him with moral government—makes him a responsible agent.

IV. The partial history of the race. Of these forty generations we have for the most but little more than the mention of the name of one individual of each. We talk of "the history of the world," but who knows the history of one of a generation? What a biography has each! What hopes—fears—sorrows—joys—battles—anarchies—epochs—revolutions, are connected with one soul! Vast cycles in the great eternity will be absorbed in fathoming the history of man.

V. The common Redeemer of the race. Down through all these generations, JESUS came. Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. *God redeems man by man.*

“Who this is we must learn, for man he seems  
In all his lineaments, though in his face  
The glimpses of his Father’s glory shine.”—*Milton.*

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#### SECOND SECTION.—Matt. i. 18—25.

##### *The Mental Difficulties of Joseph\*—its Moral Suggestions.*

I. God knows the mental difficulties of good men. Mary’s position was a trying one: her virtue was under a cloud, and the eye of suspicion was turned at her; but the inner energy of conscious rectitude then, as ever, would nobly bear up her spirits. Events soon cleared the mist, and brought her forth as the spotless and honored heroine of ages. *Suspected virtue can afford to wait.* But Joseph’s trial seems greater. Strong attachment, and high principles of honor and piety, were battling within him; high hopes were blighted, and long-cherished purposes were broken up. What soul-stirring thoughts would start in that breast of his! There was ONE who observed the workings of his anxious mind—who understood his “thoughts afar off.”

##### *Thoughts are heard in heaven.*

II. God removes mental difficulties in connexion with conscientious thoughtfulness. While he “thought on these things,” the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream. He did not act from impulse; he paused in the use of his

\* *Vide* Bloomfield’s Greek Testament, vol. 1; also Olshausen, vol. I.



reason—inquired for the right course; and the Almighty Spirit came to his help. Thus he always guides man. He directs the planets by force—brutes by instinct—man by reason. He controls all men, but guides none save the *thoughtful*. He who would “follow Providence” must become an earnest thinker—“inquire in his temple.”

III. God removes mental difficulties by disclosing his redemptive plan. And she shall bring forth a Son, &c. In the disclosure made to Joseph, the birth of Jesus is represented as supernatural—the mission of Jesus as remedial—and the nature of Jesus as divine. This disclosure was quite satisfactory. “Then Joseph, being raised from sleep,” &c. A knowledge of God’s redemptive plan will solve all moral problems: it reveals the human and divine—sheds a clear light both on our duty and destiny—

“As the great sun, when he his influence  
Sheds on the frost-bound waters, the glad stream  
Flows to the ray, and warbles as it flows.”—*Coleridge*.

In all the intellectual difficulties of spiritual life—amidst intertwining paths, and under skies cold and dark with doubts, when forced by urgent questionings, and conflicting sentiments, well-nigh to a fearful crisis—let us, with Joseph-like thoughtfulness, pause, even on the margin; turn devoutly the eye and ear of reason up to the ALL-KNOWING: “He shall send from heaven,” and help. Some kind angel shall course his downward way, and inbreathe to the distracted bosom a thought that shall dispel the spirit-clouds, and leave the scene in all the serenity, beauty, and promise of a summer’s day. The source of Joseph’s distress gave birth to the greatest blessing of his being: even so, out of the mental difficulties of the devout thinker, as from parturient chaos of old, shall come forth a system that shall encircle him with brightness, and emparadise him with bliss.

## Wealthful Rays of Genius.

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### THE SCIENCE.

"The soul is mere darkness till it is illuminated with the knowledge of God."—*Plato*.

### PEASANT PIETY.

"Sublimar in this world know I nothing than a peasant saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendour of heaven spring from the humblest depths of earth like a light shining in great darkness."—*Carlyle*.

### THE MORAL FALL OF MAN.

"We believe in the wreck of humanity: we believe that its unfortunate ship has perished; but that the remains of the great catastrophe float on the waves. A few of these are fit for some use, but none of them can bear to the shore the least of the passengers."—*Vinet*.

### THE RECORDS OF CONSCIENCE INEFFACEABLE.

"Though in many men it sleeps in regard to motion, yet it never sleeps in regard to observation and notice; it may be hard and seared, it can never be blind. That writing on it which seems invisible and illegible, like letters written with the juice of lemon, when it is brought to the fire of God's judgment, will be most clear."—*Bishop Reynolds*.

### THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF MERE HUMAN METHODS TO RENOVATE SOCIETY.

"When some one was enlarging to Coleridge on the tendency for good of some scheme which was expected to regenerate the world, the poet flung up into the air the down of a thistle which grew by the roadside, and went on to say, 'The tendency of that thistle is towards China, but I know, with assured certainty, it will never get there; nay, it is more than probable that, after sundry eddyings and gyrations up and down, backwards and forwards, it will be found somewhere near the place in which it grew.'"—*M'Cosh*.

### THE LAMPS OF VIRTUE.

"Now we labour, and our lamps fluctuate among the gusts and temptations of the present world; but only let us give heed that our flame burn in such strength, that the winds of temptation may rather fan the flame than extinguish it."—*Augustin*.

### THE MAMMON-MAN.

"There are no propinquities to him. In his very nature, indeed, he becomes as little human as that which he adores. Where his gold is buried his affections too are buried. The figure which Salvian uses in speaking of him is scarcely too bold,—that his soul assimilates itself to his treasure, and is transmuted, as it were, into a mere earthly mass."—*Dr. Thomas Brown*.

# A HOMILY

ON

## Aaron's Rod; or, the Priests for the People.

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"And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."—Numb. xvii. 8.

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THERE are three facts suggested by the extraordinary piece of Mosaic history contained in this chapter:—First. *That "the people" require priests.* Arrangements are here made, by HIM who does nothing in vain, for supplying Israel with a succession of men who should act the hierarch from age to age, down to the period when the Great Priest of humanity should appear, and by ONE sacrifice perfect for ever them that are sanctified. This provision for the children of Abraham accords with the *felt* want of the descendants of Adam. Active as the soul, and wide as the race, has been the solicitude for some person or persons rightly to mediate between the human and divine. Hence, Pagan as well as Jew, all tribes and states, have their "sacred order"—men who profess to face the stern Deity of the people turn aside his thunderbolts, and brighten their heavens with love. This universal priesthood is full of significance—it is a fact suggestive of truths that may be elaborated into systems. It embodies the instinctive beliefs of humanity and the fundamentals of all theology. It implies, for example, man's faith in the existence of a *personal* God, who is acquainted with the events of his individual history—a *moral* relation to that God, and the necessity of dealing with him through the mediation of others more holy than himself. These truths underlie all religions and pervade all souls.

Reason may and ought to work them into forms of scientific beauty and proportion; but it cannot, however infidel its purpose or masterly its dialectics, expunge them from the *credenda* of man. They are independent of logic: argument can neither prove nor falsify them. Their foundations are settled deep in the soul by Him whose offspring we are. They are like the fixed stars in the firmament of human history: the thick fogs of ignorance and the floating vapors of scepticism frequently cloud but can never quench them; they burn and blaze through all. Infidel theories, like meteoric bodies, have from time to time swept the horizon, and dimmed their lustre for a passing moment; but, far up the deep blue, they were seen shining the next hour with a greater radiance than before.

If such universal and instinctive religious truths as these are implied in the very existence of a priesthood, it is manifestly absurd to refer, as the infidel has frequently done, all religion to the crafty influence of sacerdotal agency. The priesthood is to the religious in man what the clouds are to the ocean—the effect, not the cause. The sun-gales of intelligence may scatter all priests as clouds, but the ocean of religious sentiment in man will remain full and deep as ever. You may as well refer all poetry and philosophy to professional poets and sages as to refer all religion to priests. As the spirit of poetry would have breathed in every creation of fancy, and that of philosophy in every step of earnest inquiry—had Homer and Socrates never lived—so the spirit of religion would have worked in humanity had there never been an Aaron.

The second fact suggested by the history before us is, *that the people are liable to be imposed upon by false priests.* Men assume the priestly office who have not the spiritual qualification: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, are signal examples of this. The reason they sought the office was not love of priest-work but of priest-power—the honor and immunities which Jehovah had attached to the priest's position. This has ever been the cause of this tendency where the moral

qualification has not existed. Although special honors and privileges were attached by *Divine authority* to no priesthood but the Levitical—because the Levitical only was of Divine appointment—yet so strong is the religious sentiment in the race, that it has ever invested its priests with the highest honors it could confer. The people have always felt that this prolific earth produces nothing too good for their priests. They robe them in splendor—they feed them on luxuries—they pronounce their names with reverence—they give their very souls into their custody—their kings and heroes crouch to their influence, and entreat their prayers ;—their imbecilities are genius—their platitudes, inspiration—their absurdities, the doctrines of God.

Now, this propensity of the people to exalt and aggrandize the priesthood has invested the office with strong attractions to every seeker of wealth and aspirant for power ; hence the tendency of worldly and worthless men to assume the sacred character. The main cause, therefore, of a false priesthood I trace to the people—to the force of their religious instinct, developed under ignorance, up to superstition. It is fashionable in these times to denounce priestcraft. Many authors and lecturers, who set themselves up as regenerators of society, level their wordy artillery against it as the grand foe of human progress. I have no word to utter on its *behalf*: one's best nature loathes its *animus*, and burns with indignation at remembrance of the evils it has entailed upon our species ; \* still the chief cause and the exclusive cure are with the people. Priestism, like the fabled vampire, sucks the blood of mortals in the night. Give the people light—infuse the spirit of independent thought, and you will banish it from your temples, as you have the genii from your groves, and the witches from your homes.

The third fact suggested by the history before us is, *that there are men whom God appoints as priests for the people.* To settle for ever the question as to who, in all future ages,

\* See Howitt on Priestcraft.



should officiate as God's priests in Israel, the following expedient was adopted by the Divine command:—The twelve tribes were each to take a rod, on which was to be written the name of their head. The name of Aaron, however, was to be inscribed on the rod belonging to the tribe of Levi. These rods, when thus provided, were to be deposited "in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony." It was determined, that the man whose rod should be found with blossoms in the morning should be God's true priest. "And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel." These orders are obeyed: each brings his rod as directed. Moses lays them in the tabernacle until the following morning, when the Divine criterion would be presented, and the controversy settled for ever. We may be assured that the deepest solicitude now agitated all Israel. Hope and fear, with their counter-reasonings, emotions and influences, alternated with *unwonted force* in every bosom, and distracted every heart. But few slept—many prayed—all were anxious that night. Each nocturnal hour as it struck would heighten the excitement. The decisive morning dawns at last, and the time for Moses to enter the tabernacle is come. The "man of God" punctually fulfils his task; he enters the sacred place, and all the rods are dry sticks but one, and that one has "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds";—it belongs to Aaron. Aaron is, therefore, God's priest for Israel.

Now, the priesthood which Jehovah thus established amongst the Israelites has ceased for upwards of eighteen centuries. It was "ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." It fulfilled its mission, and has passed away. The one oblation of Calvary superseded for ever the necessity of the specific ministry of the Jewish priests; still, in a secondary sense,—in the sense of *mediating between God and the people*,—there is yet a priesthood on earth as truly divine in its constitution as the Aaronic;—a priesthood, however, whose function is not to present a *something from the people to God as a satis-*

*faction for sin, but to present a something from God to the people as motives for holiness.* It presents God to man rather than man to God. Its design is to catch the inspirations of infinite love, and breathe them, life-warm, through the world—to reach the ideas of the great “Father of Spirits,” and to bring them down with fire and force upon the moral consciousness of his children.

“The thoughts that make  
The life of souls—the truths, for whose sweet sake  
We to ourselves and to our God are dear.”

*True religious teachers*—they who, by the manifestation of the truth, commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God—are God’s priesthood now, and they only—they are THE PRIESTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

But now, as in the history of the Jews before us, there is a dispute about the priesthood: there are rival priests amongst us. Both the Papal and Anglican Churches profess to furnish priests—“called of God”—for the people. The two classes are in our midst—they cross our path—they enter our dwellings—they press on us their sacerdotal offices. Each assert their exclusive right to wear the costume, discharge the functions, secure the honors, and enjoy the immunities. They mutually condemn each other as heretics—as Korahs, Dathans, and Abirams. Under such circumstances, is it not time for us to inquire who are the truly authorized priests? Without attaching any mystic meaning to Aaron’s “rod that budded,” I would reply, they are the true priests who, like that rod, develop LIFE, BEAUTY, and FRUIT.

*First* LIFE is an attribute of a true priest. We speak, of course, of spiritual life. The spiritual life of a being is his presiding sentiment or disposition—the chief inspiration of the soul—that which gives motion and character to all. Consequently, in the scriptures, true religion is called the “life of God”—the life of Jesus manifested in the mortal body. The same master-disposition—LOVE—which moves the Infinite, and was embodied in Christ, is the presiding element of every

holy mind : God is its spring, rule, and end. Its instinct is an everlasting "thirst after the living God."

*Life is a resisting force.* In its humblest form it counteracts gravitation, the stupendous power that binds, as in bands of adamant, the material universe together. The smallest blade that raises its tiny head into light, or the feeblest insect that sports in the sunbeam, displays a force superior to that which governs the ocean or controls the stars. The tree rises, we stand erect, the bird soars aloft on happy wing, because of life. Take life away, and, by the force of gravity, the tree falls, we descend to the dust, and the feathered songster sinks, stone-like, to the ground. It is thus with religion: it is a force in the soul superior to all the influences of the world. The "beggarly elements" gravitate the carnal to the dust, but are triumphantly resisted by the spiritual. The truly religious man, amidst the influences of this life, is not like a feather in the air, gyrating with the current, having no inward force to sustain or guide it, but, as the eagle, he mounts upward. He may be shook, and pressed down at times by the tempest, still he keeps his wings expanded, pierces through the cloud, and pursues his sun-ward way. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

*Life is an appropriating force.* Vegetable and animal existences have a power of appropriating to themselves all surrounding elements that are conducive to their well-being; it converts the varied gases into nutriment, to promote its strength and development. Wherever there is true religion, there is a power to render all external circumstances subservient to its own strength and growth: all things work together for its good. The anchoretic mood and doctrine of some priests indicate not only wrong views of spiritual culture, but a sad lack of spiritual life: they teach that it is such a weak and tender thing that it can only speak in tears and grow in

closets. False view this! On this earth there is nothing stronger. The really religious man requires not the shut-up hot house of the exotic plant, but the uncovered heavens of the oak that grows in its native soil. He is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Storms give his principles strength of fibre and depth of root. If thou hast the root of the matter in thee, my friend, give it soil and open air, and fear not: like ivy, it can thrive in all weathers, heave oppressive castles from its bosom, and make the fallen ruins a bed on which to spread out its branches luxuriantly to the sun.

*Life is a propagating force.*—It has the "seed in itself." Forests start from acorns, and boundless harvests from the solitary grain. Wherever there is religious life, it will spread. It scatters the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever. No mind in society has such a creative and plastic force as the truly religious: it makes new creatures in Christ Jesus. The moral progeny of one earnest, holy mind out-number our expectations, and will be known only in the judgment.

Such, then, is religious life. It is not a mere sentiment of the heart or an idea of the intellect; it is a veritable force. Where this life is there will always be the charm of *individuality*. No two seeds will have precisely the same form. Each will express itself in its own way—have its own peculiar stem, and leaf, and hue. So it will be with man, whose *soul* lives; he will express his own veritable nature; his idiosyncrasies will appear: having his own mind, he will have his own face, voice, and gait. He may be of an inferior mould, but still interesting, because natural. He is mind, not a machine—a voice, not an echo—a growth, not a manufacture. Sadly and proverbially lacking has been this charm of individuality in all priesthoods. It is said that the vast majority of ministers are cast in four or five ecclesiastical moulds, and that their mannerism soon betray their sect; that, even in the street, they are discovered, not only as distinct from the other sons of Adam, but as belonging to some one of the denominations.

The allegation, we fear, is too true to debate. The training of ministers tends to this: they are educated as officials rather than as men—for what they are to be, rather than what they are—for the close temple, rather than the open world—to preach a ready-made creed, rather than to learn and love universal truth.

Moreover, where this life is there will be the charm of *variety*. Life is constantly changing its forms: trees dress themselves in new beauty, and birds moult their plumage every year. The priest who has life in him will be rich in every variety of thought and illustration. Whilst settled to the everlasting principles of the gospel, as nature to her laws, he will be as varied in his forms of thought as nature in her phenomena. As the lyre in the celebrated Egyptian statue of Memnon became musical when struck with the beams of the sun, so the soul of him who is full of life will speak in some fresh note of music whenever touched by the ray of truth.

Yes; the priests the people now want must have this life. They do not want less intellect or less learning in their ministers: with less of the mere linguistic technical erudition, too often developed in pedantic utterances, they perhaps can do, but not with less of the real learning of great principles, of life, experience, spiritual philosophy, and of God's great gospel; but more *life*—healthy, manly, religious life—they must have. A ministry like Aaron's rod, ever budding, blossoming, and producing almonds, is the ministry for the people.

*Secondly.* BEAUTY is an attribute of a true priest: he must not only bud, but *blossom*. The susceptibility of the beautiful is a potential power of the human soul: it influences the old—it leads captive the young. No word in the spoken vocabulary of man is of more frequent use. There are two kinds of beauty—the sensational and the moral. Infinite Goodness has made exuberant provision for both. Nature, in her ten thousand forms of loveliness,—

“The fields, the groves,  
The winding rivers, and the azure main,”—



and art, in her exquisite expressions of taste, are ministries to the former ;—spiritual truth, moral goodness, the holy character of God, address the latter. These different elements of beauty have little or nothing in common. The sensational depends upon the quality of the senses, the moral upon the quality of the soul. The eye of the one is on the changing properties of matter, and grows dim with years ; that of the other on the immutable principles of moral goodness, and grows brighter with the ages : the heart of the one catches its inspiration from the creature, that of the other from the Creator. The one is the poetry of the eye and ear, the other of the intuitional soul.

Now, it is the moral beauty that the true priest exhibits—the beauty that appeals to the religious nature of men—“ *the beauty of holiness.*” This is the beauty of the Lord : the glory of God is his goodness. It is not the elegance of dress, the polish of manners, or the flowers of speech, but the *natural unfolding* of the spiritual life. All life has its development, and, as LOVE is the principle of this life, its unfoldments will always be beautiful. The truly benevolent can no more hide the attributes of moral beauty than the star its lustre or the rose its fragrance : they will sound in their conversation, breathe in their spirit, and shine in their deeds. The life of love has many blossoms, whose hues and fragrance are ever delightful to the moral heart of humanity. There is the blossom of a *meek and humble spirit*. Pride is an element of disgust to all but its possessor : he who is puffed up with notions of self-superiority is great and lovely to none but himself. True humility commands the respect of all. It is a law of mind, that he who abaseth himself shall be exalted—the people will lift him to eminence. Christ descends “to the lower parts of the earth” that he might ascend to the throne of human souls. Love produces this element of beauty : it is a divine passion that burns up all notions of self ; the very consciousness of the ME is lost in the presence of the loved *Infinite*, as the night-star is lost in the blaze of day : charity, therefore, “vaunteth not itself.” There is the blossom of *tender*

*sympathy with the suffering.* The disposition that weeps with those who weep, takes the sufferer by the hand, and seeks the mitigation of his woes, must ever awake the admiration of man. Moral mind everywhere echoes the sentiment of Christ—"Blessed are the merciful." The patriarch of Uz gives us a touching account of its power over the general mind, as exhibited in his own history. "The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." This is the sympathy required. Alas! priestly sympathy has seldom been of this kind: it has been verbal rather than practical—dealing more in sentimental harangues than in the *labors* of love. It has been partial rather than comprehensive—weeping over the invisible and unfelt woes of men's souls, and taking little heed of the tangible and pressing evils of their bodies. It has been more official than human—the manifestations of a functionary rather than the natural outgoings of a brother's heart. It has fraternized with the wealthy, but stood aloof from the poor. It has proclaimed, in tones of wondrous pathos, privileges to the "upper classes," but thundered harshly of duties to those below. It is no wonder that the pulpit is becoming effete, or rather that the Christian ministry has lost attractions for the millions. If it would rise again into power, let it blossom fully with this Job-like sympathy—a sympathy which would grasp the entire man—regard his temporal as well as spiritual interests—seek to give bread to the hungry, as well as Bibles to the ungodly—advocate *rights* as well as enforce duties—grasp with as much generous affection the horny hand of the poor as the gloved one of the rich, and join heartily in the common battle of the indigent and oppressed against the social

demons of monopoly and injustice. Let this sympathy inspire the ministry, and it will save it from the doom to which it is hastening; it will give it a pulse of life, a breath of fragrance, a flower of beauty, that will fascinate the world yet; and the heart-touched populace will shout again, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

*There is the blossom of magnanimity*—a spirit to bear trials with fortitude—to control the temper under irritating forces—to throw a benignant smile upon the face of a foe—to yield ingenious sympathy to those who are not "of us," and rejoice in their success—to carry out conviction of duty at the sacrifice of interests—to forget self in the cause of humanity and God—to brave, with an exultant heart, the greatest perils for the sake of great principles and the common good;—this is a spirit of beauty which has ever, and must ever command the highest admiration of souls. Though we almost dislike the words "hero" and "heroism," because of their association with the cant of modern literature and speech, yet the magnanimity of which we speak is the inspiration of the highest heroism that the pen of the historian ever recorded, or that the poet's fancy ever formed: "*It suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*"

This is the beauty, then, required in the priest for the people. The priestly vestments of cloth or linen, however fine their texture or elegant their make, they regard as being out of fashion now—the musty relics of ages they have left behind, appearing to them like the old crumbling baronic castles, hoary mementoes of cruel despotisms. The artificial classes of society may be pleased with priests adorned with artificial flowers, but the unsophisticated multitudes are beginning,

thank God ! to reject all priests but those that have on them the fresh and lovely "blossoms" of spiritual life. These they cannot reject if they would : God speaks through them to their hearts with a voice of more soul-subduing poetry than he does through the blooming beauties of the summer landscape. "The beauty of the Lord our God is upon them ;" and this is the true sacerdotal robe—the heavenly mantle.

*Thirdly.* FRUITFULNESS is an attribute of true priests. As Aaron's rod produced almonds as well as budded and blossomed, a true priest not only lives and unfolds a noble disposition, but is really useful. Paul speaks of "the fruit of the spirit"—and, consequently, of the fruit of the spiritual man—as consisting in three things : in all RIGHTEOUSNESS, GOODNESS, and TRUTH ;—the first, as opposed to all injustice and dishonesty ; the second, as opposed to the ten thousand forms of selfishness that curse the world ; and the last, as opposed to all that is erroneous and false in the doctrines and theories of men. In keeping with this, Solomon tells us that the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. Let a man out-act, in all his relations, the principles of *righteousness*, *goodness*, and *truth*, and his existence in this world will be a tree of life, whose fruit shall tend to the healing of the nations.

Such expressions as these suggest and warrant two thoughts in relation to the usefulness of a true priest :—It is *spiritual*—it is fruit of the Spirit, and for spirit. What is spiritual usefulness ? Not ministering to the sensuous elements of the soul, by material representations of truth and touching anecdotes ;—it is to be feared that, in many sanctuaries, the mere animal sympathies of human nature are far more extensively nurtured than the moral. Not ministering to the religious vanity of men, by oft-repeated assurances that they, the units, are the "chosen" ones, and that the teeming myriads are reprobates ;—a more arrogant and selfish race of men know I none than those who are fed congregationally with such food. Not ministering to the popular prejudices of men, by the echoing and re-echoing of preconceived notions, and dealing out that which is ever floating on the surface of the

soul. Not ministering to the selfishness of men, by constantly urging heaven with its beatitudes and hell with its maledictions as the great motives to a religious life, thus turning the everlasting principles of morality into a question of barter, and the religion of Jesus into mere problems of "loss and gain." But to be useful, is to minister those eternal principles of the gospel which develop the conscience—solve the inquiries—purify the moral sympathies—free the will—crush the evil, and foster the good. I gauge not a minister's usefulness by the numbers he draws around him, but by the amount of holy thought he awakens, spiritual impulse he generates, and manly, moral mind he develops. In a congregation of twenty there may be a larger amount of spiritual development than in one of a thousand; and thus the lesser in number will be the greater in power, and will spread a wider, holier, and happier influence on the universe of God.

Not only is his usefulness spiritual, but it is affected by the *natural influence* of his life. There are two kinds of useful agency—the voluntary and involuntary; that which a man employs occasionally or periodically, with the special purpose of effecting some good, and that which he employs unconsciously as the regular bearing of his life. The latter is incomparably the most valuable; it involves the former. A man may, and often does from occasional impulse, put forth certain direct efforts for usefulness, who has no real spiritual life in him; but he who has this spiritual life is certain to employ such voluntary efforts. The former is only a very small portion of a man's history: the voluntary efforts of the most indefatigable man are but a small item of his average common-day existence. The former is dependent for success upon the latter. The special efforts of a man will not accomplish much unless they are corroborated by his living example—unless his life confirms the doctrines that his lips declare; and, moreover, the former, which in itself is so much the feebler, has far more opposition to contend with. When men are specially addressed on the subject of religion, they are likely to raise in their own minds counter-arguments, and there is often a tendency



to resist the impressions which are sought to be made ; but there is no reasoning against the former—it acts like the all-penetrating light and dew. Now, this involuntary influence is insured in the case of the true priest ; his life naturally leads to usefulness ; it is its general bearing ; all the items of his daily existence tell in this direction. His “life is light”—a light that illumines, warms, and vivifies the sphere in which he lives, and that will widen its range of creative energy through all futurities.

The pith of our homily amounts to this,—the people must have priests, and the priests they require must have life, beauty, and fruit. Who, then, are the priests for the people ? Not the men who presume to mediate between their race and their Deity by *sacrifice*—the PRIEST-SACRIFICERS. These are miserable mimics of the old ceremonial Levite—the grim and ghastly spectres of departed ages and obsolete customs ; they insult the great High Priest by insinuating the insufficiency of the Calvary atonement ; they misrepresent the *spirituale* of religion, and lamentably impose upon the credulous and superstitious of our times : but the men that mediate between God and the race in the way of spiritual *instruction*—the PRIEST-TEACHERS—are the priesthood now. But who of them are the priests for the people ? Not the men whose hearts are cold in selfishness—whose moral sympathies are dead, however profound their theology, apostolic their ordination, or eloquent their utterance. Such men are like the rods of all the tribes but that of Levi, though carved into symmetrical form by the outward hand of education, dry sticks still ; but they are the men of LIFE—life not craven-heartedly skulking into cloisters, but strong, with a sin-repelling energy—standing erect, with a bold front, amidst the gravitating forces of evil : men not moulded in their manners by the hand of circumstances, but fashioned, as the branches of the tree, by the vital force within : men who can bend the outward to their will, —like the Æolian harp, turn the wild tumult of circumstances into music ; or, like the sun, condense their deleterious streams into clouds, that burst in refreshing showers upon the soul.

They are the men of BEAUTY, whose daily life blossoms with the flowers of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" who have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, develop his attributes, and wear "the robe of RIGHTEOUSNESS" as their sacerdotal dress. They are the men of USEFULNESS; they live not to themselves, nor to sect or party, but to Christ and the world; they seek not the fleece but the flock—not money but men. These are the priests for the people!

Yes; the men who, with world-wide and Christ-like sympathies, bring down from the lofty heavens the soul-kindling and raising truths of God to the moral heart of mankind—whether in poetry or prose; through pen or tongue; whether of the cleric or lay, ordained or not—ARE THE PRIESTS FOR THE PEOPLE now. The "Urim and Thummim" gleam from their breasts as the moral radiations of the Godhead.

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Sixth.

"Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up," &c.—Job iv. 12, *et seq.*

SUBJECT:—*Fellowship with the Unseen.*

WHETHER this vision was within or without the mind of Eliphaz—to the imagination or the senses;—whether the address of the "spirit" that passed before him and spoke was divinely inspired or not, the three following propositions which it suggests and illustrates would be true. They are true, independent of this vision, and independent of the Bible itself.

I. That man has a capacity to hold intercourse with the spiritual world. The existence of a spiritual world is one of the fundamental faiths of humanity : it is a *felt sentiment* with man in his unreasoning state, peopling with ghosts the whole sphere of his being ; a *theory* with man in his reflective state, accounting for a class of phenomena otherwise inexplicable ; a living *conviction* with man in his Christian state, bringing him under “the powers of the world to come.” The material universe is but the creature, the instrument, and the sensuous form of the spiritual—a “vesture” which shall wear out with ages, and be folded up. Now, man’s capacity for intercourse with the spiritual is twofold—to *receive* and *feel* its communications. Eliphaz had a capacity to receive the utterance of the “spirit” that broke his slumbers, and startled into fearful earnestness every power of his soul. It was but a “little” that “his ear received ;” but a few sentences that he caught. Our ignorance of the spiritual arises not from the lack of communication. God speaks fully ; the spiritual speaks in everything ; there is no speech or language where its voice is not heard ; but from the lack of a capacity to take in all, our ears receive a little, and only a little. We are in the universe like a child who enters a lecture-room when a profound philosopher is in the midst of a discourse on some great branch of science, and who leaves before the subject has concluded : “his ear received a little,” and all it received he understood not. God’s great discourse commenced ages before we entered the scene of knowledge, and will go on when we are in the dust. We only hear a part, and much of that we understand not ; still, though little, it is something—something great, solemn, suggestive, sanctifying—something that proves the existence of the capacity to receive. But he has not only a capacity for receiving, but also for *feeling* spiritual communications. “Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.” There may be existences of sheer intellect, possessing no susceptibilities of feeling, who would receive the most momentous thoughts from the spiritual universe, without the slightest emotion.

Such is not man's nature—he has *heart* as well as head. One thought may act on his soul as the fierce winds on the seas—lash it into foaming and battling billows of emotion. Often, as in the case before us, deep *spiritual impressions* come most unexpectedly. It is night, the toils of the day are over, and the man has retired to rest. All is dark, lonely, and silent around him; the doors are fastened, and, with conscious security, he sinks into repose. But, see! a vision approaches; it halts right before his eye; it illumines midnight with its brightness; it breaks the silence with its voice, and delivers a message from the Everlasting. What a symbol is this of a spiritual thought! It often comes into the chamber of a man's soul at night on his bed, breaks his slumbers, and shakes his spirit to its centre. Nothing can exclude it—no walls, gates, bolts, or locks, can shut out a thought. He who made the mind knows its every avenue, and can reach it whenever and however he pleases. Friend, God can import, at any moment, to thy nature thoughts either hideous and malignant, that shall scare and terrify thee as demons, or lovely and benevolent, that shall, as angels, delight thy spirit and help thee on thy destiny.

It is frequently the case that man's communication from the spiritual world is connected with terror and alarm. "The hair of my flesh stood up," says Eliphaz. Such is the connexion between mind and body, that the force of the emotion caused the warm blood to rush back to the heart, leaving the extremities to contract with cold, and thus produce the effects here expressed. The fact that an invisible and intangible agent like *thought* should produce such a physical phenomenon as this, is no feeble argument in favor of the immateriality of the soul. But why should *alarm* be the general effect of spiritual communication upon man? Why should he be so frequently overwhelmed in fear when in contact with the spiritual? Is he not spirit? Is not his Father spirit? Is not his ultimate home a scene of spirits? Ought he not, therefore, to hail rather than dread spiritual communications?—be delighted with them rather than alarmed? Yes; every sound

from the spiritual universe ought to fall upon his soul with far more exquisite emotion than the sweetest strains of music on the outward ear. His terror confirms the scripture doctrine, that his spirit is not in its normal state—that it is depraved.

II. That man's character places him in a humble position in the spiritual world. The address of the "spirit" to Eliphaz, significantly expresses man's *moral inferiority*:—"Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay?" There are two ideas implied in this language powerfully expressive of man's moral meanness in the spiritual empire:—First, that Jehovah is infinitely superior to angels: so immeasurable is the moral distance, that he charges them with folly;—and, secondly, that man is inferior to angels:—"How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay?" In the empire of spirit, the citizen is estimated not by the amount of his wealth, the extent of his knowledge, the greatness of his intellect, or the brilliancy of his genius, but by the moral virtues that mark his character: *the holiest is the greatest*. Herein is man's inferiority as a citizen. The best is tainted with sin, and is unworthy of fellowship with those high ones in the universe whom the Almighty charges with folly. If thou, O man, art thus mean in the domain of souls, what humility should ever breathe in thy spirit, and reign in thy life! How monstrous—how surprisingly impious—thy complaining strictures on the operations of a perfect God! How obvious, and how binding, the obligation of boundless trust in the principles of his government, and of a hearty concurrence in all his doings! Above all, how oughtest thou to hail with gratitude, and to seek with earnestness, the mediative help of Jesus, to raise thee in the spiritual kingdom, and give to thee the sympathy and friendship of an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, and of God, the Judge of all!

III. That man's earthly state is but a temporary separation



from a *conscious* existence in the spiritual world. We are in the great universe of spirits now, but we are not conscious of the fact. This body is spoken of as a "house." Though wondrously and intimately associated with my conscious being, it is not *me*, but *mine*—my dwelling, not myself. As the tenant is independent of his house,—can live though he leave it, or though it fall to ruins,—so I, *myself*, am distinct from this body, and shall live after it has crumbled into dust. Death is but the tenant changing apartments. Our present apartments, constructed of gross matter, partitions us not from the spiritual world, for we are of it, and in it we ever live, as in an atmosphere, but from the *consciousness* of it. The partition, however, will soon be taken down, and then *spirit* will be more real to us than matter is now.

Several things are here suggested about this departure into the consciousness of the spiritual:—First. It is *inevitable*. Our present dwellings are not built of brass, iron, marble, or granite—they are "houses of clay," exposed to all the changes of the outward elements: the sun may harden it, but the shower will wear it away; the frost may bind it, but it will crumble in the thaw. Its foundation, too, is not the everlasting rock, but the "dust." It requires not some behemoth-force to tear it down—it is "crushed before the moth." A breath—a worm—a thought—an atom, can break up this house of clay. Secondly. It is *constantly* progressing. The process of decay proceeds without pause. We are being "destroyed from morning to evening:" every hour, every minute, we are moving towards the *felt*-spiritual; we cannot halt a moment in our course; we are impelled by a force as resistless as that which rolls the planets in their spheres. Thirdly. It is *frequently disregarded*. Our departure from this world, however active our lives or influential our positions, will not awaken much attention among the men we leave behind. "We perish for ever without any regarding it." My proud friend, whatever thou mayest think about the wondrous esteem in which thou art held by thy compeers, and of the importance of thy life to society, though thou art a

merchant whose vast transactions influence the markets of the world, or a statesman whose speeches control the doings and destinies of cabinets, or, what is greater still, a writer moving the minds of the millions, but few of the men that know thee will pause in their business to think of thy death, and fewer still will drop a tear on thy grave. The sorrow of those that love thee most will be but as a cloud upon the sky, however dark for the moment, soon dispersed. In a few short days after the earth has closed on thy remains, thy very children shall gambol on the hearth, with their little hearts as gladsome as ever; and the convivial laugh and jest of domestic joy will be heard as usual in thy dwelling. The world can do without thee, my friend; everything will progress as usual when thou art in thy grave. Thy death will be but a blade withered in the fields; the landscape can spare thee;—a drop exhaled from the ocean, the mountain-billows will not miss thee. Fourthly. The departure *terminates earthly glory*. The adventitious distinctions of birth, beauty, wealth, power, are all ended when men leave their “houses of clay.” Doth not their excellency, which is in them, go away? Lastly. Their departure occurs before any perfection in wisdom is attained—“they die even without wisdom.” The wisest die with scarcely more than the alphabet of knowledge!

Seeing that we are of the spiritual—that we *receive* and *feel* communications from it—that our moral relation to it is not right, and that every moment we are moving into an intensely felt connexion with it, is it not madness to have our sympathies, thoughts, and aims, bounded by the earthly? May the Great Spirit regenerate us into the spiritual now! “He that is born of the Spirit, is SPIRIT.” *Spirit* in him is being felt, developed, and raised into living sympathy with God and his holy universe. Death to such need start no fear. He may say of the last enemy—

“Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun, and shadows all beneath,  
So, in the light of great eternity,  
Life eminent creates the shade of death;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.”—*Tennyson*.

## Analysis of Homily the Seventh.

"But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 12.

SUBJECT:—*The Way to Reach our Destiny.*

HOWEVER diversified the opinions of men in religion, all are agreed that none here arrive at their true destiny—that they do not come up to the full ends of their existence. They are conscious of desires unfulfilled—powers undeveloped—obligations undischarged. They feel the great disparity between the ideal man and the actual—the abstract and concrete—the felt *ought* and the palpable *is*. The question, therefore, how shall we come up to the true mark of our being—reach that point where every power shall find employ, every desire gratified, and every aspiration restored—must be one of general interest. Our text will help to a solution of this question. The word "apprehend" means to grasp: it is used in allusion to the eagerness with which the winner in the Grecian race seized the pole which marked the end of the course. The passage, therefore, expresses that Christ had taken hold upon Paul for some specific object, and that the apostle's grand aim was to take hold upon that object. These two things are essential to the realization of every man's true destiny.

I. In order to reach our true destiny, Christ must lay hold on our being. There are several forces in society laying hold of men—*ambition, avarice, business, superstition, pleasure*. One or other of these grasp and possess most men. How does Christ lay hold of men? Not miraculously, but by the laws of moral influence—by appealing to the great moving impulses of our *spiritual* constitution. First. He appeals to the *sense of truth* within us. This is a power which repudiates manifest error, and receives manifest truth. The mathematician and philosopher take hold of men through this sense. No being makes such a mighty appeal to this as Christ. Secondly. He

appeals to the *sense of right*. There is a conscience in man: he that can enlist its sympathies will grasp the man. Christ does it—*all consciences are with him*. Thirdly. He appeals to the *sense of beauty*. A sense of the beautiful is no mean element in our spirits: the landscape, the painting, the hero, often take hold of us through this faculty. Christ is moral beauty. “How great is his beauty!” Fourthly. He appeals to the *sense of gratitude*. Through this faculty, how the benefactor grasps the beneficiary! *Christ gave himself for us*. Thus, by appeals to our nature, he takes hold of us as the magnet takes hold of the steel—as the spring-sun takes hold of the seed which the husbandman has deposited in the soil, gives it a new life, and draws it up towards itself.

II. In order to reach your destiny, you must take hold of Christ’s design—you must grasp that for which he grasps you. Two facts are implied here:—First. That Christ has a specific aim in laying hold of men. What is it? We answer, condensely to make them *the subjects and agents of moral goodness*. To be good is to have the disposition—spirit—of Christ. No goodness without this. He who is its subject will be its agent—the man who *is* good will *do* good. Secondly. That the realizing of this aim requires our concentrated efforts. “I follow after,” “I press,” &c. To get moral goodness or the spirit of Christ demands labor. Assimilation requires imitation—imitation requires love—love requires knowledge—knowledge requires deep study of the model, and constant intercourse with it.

Has Christ taken hold of thee, my friend? If so, seek practically to take hold of his design—to become like him—and thou shalt be raised to his throne ere long. If he has not taken hold of thee, it is thy fault—thou hast eluded his moral grasp. There are no stronger moral forces than those that he brings to bear upon thee in the gospel. Continue to resist these, and down to deeps thou shalt sink from which there is no redemption!

# The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 23.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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## THIRD SECTION.—Matthew ii.

### *Christ's Birth in Bethlehem.—Old Types of Modern Classes.*

THE Bible is full of human nature: man, in some aspect of his being, appears on every page, and speaks in every verse. The *particular* men it presents to our notice, though living in remote ages, acting their part in a small and far-distant portion of the globe, and chiefly descendants of Abraham, represent the varied classes of men of every age, zone, and tribe. All modern men, whether chief of sinners or chief of saints, or of whatever stage in the development of virtue or vice, have their counterparts and representatives in this old holy book: it is a gallery of man-pictures, true to nature—nothing overdrawn—where each may find a portrait of his moral self. This *humanity* of the Bible, in its multiform aspects, is one of its chief characteristics and primal excellences—makes it the world's book—a book for all persons in all places, and through all periods. The Eternal One speaks the most fully, and acts the most gloriously, through the *humanity* of this volume.

In the historic facts of this chapter we have types of four classes of men which have ever existed, and which exist still, namely—*those who earnestly seek the truth; those who rest in the letter of the truth; those who are fearfully alarmed at the*



*truth; and those who are affectionate guardians of the truth.* The *Magi* represent the first, the Scribes and Pharisees the second, Herod the third, and Joseph and Mary the fourth.

With the utmost brevity, we shall merely intimate some of the points in which the historic personages of this chapter symbolize the before-stated classes:—

I. Those who earnestly seek the truth. These the “wise men from the east” represent.\* There are several points in the visit of these philosophic disciples of Zoroaster, and priests of the Zend religion, to Bethlehem, strikingly illustrative of the conduct of every earnest seeker after truth:—1. *They sought truth under the impression of its reality.* Ere they left their eastern home they had a notion of the fact that *a King for the Jews* was born. This was the spring of their mission. How they obtained this impression—whether from the tradition of their fathers, or from the writings of Hebrew seers, or through one of those *presentiments* which frequently herald great events—it is neither possible nor necessary to determine. They had it, and it moved and inspired them. Thus it is ever with the earnest truth-seeker: the *native sentiment* that there is *objective* truth somewhere is quickened into an impulse, and the soul, like the magi, leaves its own little home, enters other regions of thought, and asks, “Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?” 2. *They sought truth at the right source.* They were in quest of Him who was born King of the Jews; and to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the country, and the home of the Rabbis, they appealed. The earnest truth-seeker will have respect to the right source. Is it *physical, psychological, ethical, or redemptive* truth he is searching after? For the first he appeals to *nature*, for the second to *mind*, for the third to the *moral history of man and the Bible of God*, for the fourth to the *gospel of Christ*.

(*To be continued.*)

\* For an account of the Magi, see Enfield's “History of Philosophy;” also an interesting article in Kitto's “Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.”

# A HOMILY

ON

## Ancient Jewish Festivals, and Modern Christian Meetings.

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“Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.”—Psa. cxxii. 3, 4.

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My desire is to take advantage of the power of contrasts, in order that, by reference to a particular feature of our times, we may see how truly “the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places,” and what “a goodly heritage we have” from the Father of Mercies. I wish to say something of our great meetings, and of those meetings as contrasted with the great meetings of the ancient Jews.

I. The month of May has been for many years devoted, by the great bodies of philanthropists and Christians in this country, to the holding of the annual meetings of the various associations, by which they seek the realization of their several benevolent and evangelic designs. No man of healthy views and feelings can contemplate these assemblings with indifference and unconcern. It is not necessary to have a perfect fellowship of thought or sentiment with all that marks such gatherings; on the contrary, it is possible, and may be proper, seriously to disapprove of much that belongs to them. There may be doubts as to some of the objects sought; doubts as to the modes in which some are aimed at; doubts as to not a little that mixes itself up with the proceedings of these anniversary services. Sometimes folly may take the place of wisdom, show of substance, speech-making of truth-telling, and flattery of man of praise of God. Indeed,

although it is very common to lament the state of the pulpit, it is a great question whether a considerable reform be not desirable in the state of the platform. It may be a mistake, but I fear that its small jokes and large sophisms, its feeble thoughts and strong passions, have sadly interfered with the fulfilment of its mission, which is to be, not an innocent substitute for the theatre, but a powerful auxiliary of the Church.

But, apart from all this, take these vast congregations as a whole, and regard the fact of their convention, the breadth of view involved in their final purposes, and the moral and religious temper which they indicate and cherish, and they must be held to stand for much more than in themselves they are. They are signs of meanings deep and precious, mirrors of a glory that excelleth; and, composed of representatives of the various districts and dialects of the land, they likewise represent, and not feebly, the principles of its civil, moral, and spiritual greatness.

There is nothing, perhaps, that more faithfully reflects the state of a people than their public meetings. The conditions in which they are held serve to indicate the political principles and privileges that obtain among them; the mode in which they are conducted reveals the degree in which intelligence and independence, respect for individual liberty and human rights, and love of truth—which, while exercised upon one's own opinions, can afford due consideration to the opinions of others—have been nurtured and have grown; while the ends proposed, and the strength and simplicity with which they are pursued, accurately betoken the nature and the potency of “the things assuredly believed” respecting the great subjects which make most “glad the heart of God and man.” If you would have, in one form of exhibition, the fullest and best display of the state of any nation, go into their large assemblies; enter the conventions that embody their favorite ideas; visit the halls where the masses give vent to the emotions, impulses, and aspirations by which their hearts are filled; behold their “standing” in the presence of each other; hear

how they speak, see how they act, mark how they look ; detect the separate elements, and observe their fusion ; note the agreements and the differences, and better than from more stately and more formal gatherings, better than from their national professions, better even than from their popular literature, may you ascertain the point to which they have attained in respect of social worth and power. Even apart altogether from the ends contemplated, the benefits sought to be obtained or spread, such assemblies are important. They are important as assemblies. It is not in solitude that our nature is expressed ; the social light is the true light in which it is to be seen. Men are what they are to each other ; their mutual action brings out their individual qualities. And such meetings are useful. If nothing came of the organizations they promote, if they told not at all by way of formal agency upon the diffusion of knowledge, liberty, and the salvation of men's souls, he would take a miserably narrow view of their effects who should deem them valueless. Their good is also at the time. It is the law of God that in seeking good, good is gotten. The pursuit of knowledge is a blessing as well as its obtainment ; the inquiry for truth is useful as well as its acquisition ; the toil for virtue gives strength and honor as well as its achievement. The journey through the wilderness had many advantages for the Israelites besides its leading to the land of Canaan. And the great movements by which changes are produced in society have worth, not alone in the production of those changes, but in the exercise of faculties, the experience of laws, the testing of principles, and, in all, the growth of mind and heart and will almost inseparable from the working of them out. Public meetings have a place in this process, and not merely by the truths and sentiments which are uttered at them, but by the play of sympathetic emotion, and the running of individual feeling into channels of catholic communion. No man is like his separate self in a great congregation—he both loses and acquires importance. The rust of solitary thinking is removed, the growth of undue individualism is destroyed, while

the affections are moved to a generous and practical excitement, by a fellowship with others, that can scarce fail to leave him another and a better man. But when we connect these assemblings with the grand purposes attained by organized action, remember what may be achieved by union which cannot be achieved by separate efforts, and how much effort may be obtained for united which cannot be obtained for isolated measures, and consider the various vital relations sustained by public meetings to associated works, then alone have we an adequate impression of their significance and value as types of the condition of a people.

Need we say that, in many countries at this present time, such meetings as signalize our own could not be held? In some, the jealousy of government forbids it; in some, the spirit of the people; in some, the prevalence of ignorance, unbelief, and sin. It is a noble feature of our nation, that the population are so well practised in counsel and in work: it is a nobler one still, that so extensively they are imbued with sentiments that sympathize with public objects, and point to human good. Elsewhere we find the people kept down by civil law; elsewhere we find them unaccustomed to the employment of social energies, and using freedom, as children use dangerous weapons, for their own injury; elsewhere we find them destitute of the knowledge and the grace either to pursue or to appreciate the real welfare of themselves or others; elsewhere we find them, in respect of particular objects great and worthy, bribed or terrified to silence by principles and practices in strange contradiction to their general character and profession. But among ourselves there are the power and the will to propose the utmost catholicity of design. Whatever concerns humanity, in all its diversified relations, finds public recognition and fitting organization among us. Every good idea has "local habitation" and appropriate agency, every principle its representation, every charity its institution. They who toil for the recovery of man to God, meet; they who labour to give to their fellow-men the birthright of liberty, meet; they who seek the instruction



of the ignorant, meet ; they who seek to free Christianity from the bondage of the world or the errors of the Church, meet ; they who aim at the ten thousand objects of social charity, meet. Who can contemplate all this, and call to mind how, in different ways, it distinguishes us from other nations, without rejoicing in the goodness of God towards us as a people ? And who can look upon this great city, the central seat and point of congregation of the various movements of our days, and not experience feelings akin, but superior, to those with which an ancient Jew might say of his Jerusalem, "Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord ?"

II. My design is, however, not so much to indulge in general reflections, or to contrast our country with others, in reference to the subject now in hand, as to consider the national conventions of the ancient Jews as representative of the character and spirit of their religious system and state, and then to contrast that state and system, thus represented, with our own, as indicated by the congregations of the British people, at this season, in this metropolis. We think that an instructive view may be obtained of our privileges in this way.

There were many important services prescribed by Judaism, but three stood out from among the rest in the circumstances with which they were connected, and the objects they were designed to secure ; these were the feasts of the Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles. These were annual and national. At these all the males were required to appear before the Lord. The Passover was designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and the safety of their first-born when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed ; Pentecost, immediately following the Passover, was the feast of first fruits ; the feast of Tabernacles brought to remembrance the period in which the Jews wandered through the wilderness, and expressed the thankfulness excited by the completion of the harvest. The leading

features of that economy may be naturally supposed to mark these great festivals ; and by considering their nature, objects, and circumstances of observance, we shall be in a condition to estimate the difference between the previous and the present dispensations. What these feasts were to the Israelites, the gatherings of this season are, to a great degree, to us, accurate expressions of the spirit of our religion. There may be more points of contrast than of resemblance, but that only serves more strikingly to show how much better are the things which God has reserved for us than the things which he gave to the seed of Abraham.

The *first* point we notice is, that *the Jewish meetings were appointed—ours are not.*

The days on which the great Jewish festivals were held were specified, the services by which they were marked were prescribed. There was, there could be, no room for doubt, nor for choice. I need not say that our assemblings differ from them in this respect, nor would the fact be worthy of remark, but that it presents a characteristic feature of our whole religious system. It is not alone in these meetings, nor in meetings of any kind, that we observe this difference. The Jewish convocations did but represent their dispensation, ours do but represent our own, in this particular. The reason of this contrast is obvious : the ceremonial character of Judaism did not allow of the licence which a moral and spiritual system may permit, and a national and temporary economy might observe a strictness which, in a universal and permanent one, would be impossible.

There may be some, perhaps many, who are tempted to think it a defect in Christianity that it is so free. If we may judge by their attempt to make it less so, they certainly have not only been tempted so to think, but have fallen into the temptation. In those respects, in which they seek to supplement its institutional provisions, they may be held to consider it imperfect. It is difficult to keep the idea out of some minds that the gospel would have been more beautiful and more efficient—more adapted to our nature—had it laid down

rules or given suggestions on a great variety of matters, on which it preserves an entire silence, or speaks but little, and that little, as it were, incidentally. We can fancy them exclaiming, "Had there but been an office for this, an institution for that, a regulation for a third thing; had the wayward imaginations of men been restrained by an explicit declaration upon this subject, and their more wayward wills kept in check by a direct injunction upon that; had all the proper objects of christian pursuit been specified, and the proper modes of seeking them been laid down, what a blessed uniformity would have taken the place of present diversity and discord, and how potently would the energies of the Church have told in directions in which they now feebly move! What a waste of power would have been avoided—what a gain of harmony would have been secured!" The complaint is rebuked by the fact. He who has the "seven eyes," as well as the "seven horns," did not so judge; and we admire his counsel. He has dealt with us after another manner, and we take it to be a glory of our gospel, and not a blemish—a strength, and not a weakness. The absence of particular directions may arise from different causes—the imperfection of a system may be denoted by it, or its perfection. It does not follow that Christianity is silent when it does not so speak—there are louder voices. It does not follow that Christianity is quiescent when it does not so act—there are greater powers. Who would not rather have a forest of large and unequal trees, waving majestically before the winds of heaven, than a garden of shrubs all cut to a prim and precise pattern? The New Testament often sets before us the difference between the old and new economies, by illustrations taken from the treatment of children and servants, or of children and men. This mode of illustration suggests an idea for our present purpose. Sometimes, in the employment of an agent, you find it needful to give minute directions as to the course to be pursued, not only giving him a plain and particular account of what you wish, but careful instructions as to his mode of procedure, providing even for the case of any possible inter-

ruption of the order of his movements, leaving nothing to his wit or will, using, in fact, scarcely any mental power but memory. That is the method you adopt with a weak or wilful agent. But sometimes you content yourself with putting the person you employ into possession of your ideas and wishes, trusting to his skill to carry them out in the most efficient manner that changing circumstances may permit. He does everything except select the end to be attained. Now, the first was what God did in Judaism, the second is what he does in the gospel. He impresses his main idea upon the mind, excites an earnest sympathy with it in the heart, and sends us forth to confess, and to realize it in ways suggested by the ever-varying circumstances of time and custom. Hence the formal minuteness of Jewish services, and the liberal diversity of evangelic operations.

The *second* point worthy of attention is, *the presence of ritual attendants in Jewish, the absence of them in Christian, meetings.*

We cannot particularize. You know full well that ritualism was a main feature of the former economy, and that it marked its national festivals: the temple, the priests, the offerings, were indispensable to their proper celebration. Jerusalem was "the city of the Great King," the priests were the officers of his court, and the prescribed rites were his appointed ceremonial. All this was, spiritually, shadow and symbol. "The body is Christ"; the "truth" is Christ. Whatever was prefigured was realized and secured by him. He is "the end of the law." He has the fulness of the Godhead really. He is our Great High Priest. By his own offering he has perfected us for ever. We have in him the blessing, not its promise—the reality, not its prediction—the inheritance, not its title. The law, therefore, has vanished by reason of the gospel, to which it pointed, and from which it derived its reflected glory.

The special meaning and end of Judaism having been attained, things have taken a natural course. The reason of the extraneous and conventional sanctity that marked it having ceased, nothing is sacred now. Priests were different from

other men on grounds the removal of which leaves only men—men in different positions and offices, but still only men. The temple was different from other places as to sacredness through a presence which, having departed, the temple itself has disappeared! And sacrificial victims are no more required, because “the Lamb of God” has “taken away the sin of the world.” All this was exceptional to the course of Providence; it arose from a temporary and artificial necessity: it was not designed to be perpetual—it could not be. While it lasted, things, persons, and places, had a double sense and significance; they were as others of the same classes; and they were more—they were common and uncommon—they were secular and holy: but the last character was impressed upon them only for a season, and when “that which is perfect” came, the meaning, life, and power of all these outward and formal sanctities and separations, things, persons, and places, returned to their original state—assumed their natural appearances. Neither in one place nor another do men exclusively worship the Father; neither through one class of men nor another; neither by one mode nor another. The call is for “spirit and truth.” These make the temple, priests, and offerings.

So that it is not merely a return to a natural state that results from Christ’s coming and work. There is no loss. External sanctity has not departed, leaving us so far worse off than before. The cessation of particular and exclusive holiness and acceptance flows from the diffusion of common purity and grace. It is not that some things have sunk, it is that all have risen. The local and ritual ideas are no more, because more than was in the temple may be anywhere, and more than was in the officers of the temple may be in any men, and more than was in the services of the temple may be in the works of faith and labors of love which the people of God now engage in, most profitably to themselves and others, and most acceptably to God through Jesus Christ. The old form of godliness has perished, because a new power of godliness has visited the Church.



And is not this delightful fact brought vividly before our minds in connexion with the great gatherings of this season? See the various sections of the Christian Church in their fullest representation, their united action, and what a contrast to the annual congregations of God's most favored people! Where do they assemble? The choice of place is decided by convenience. Who conduct them? The selection of persons has respect to popular effectiveness. How are they managed? By the presentation of facts, principles, appeals. Whence this difference? Rejoice in it, my brethren. The gospel is a substance, not a shadow—it is a spirit of life, not a letter of law; so that the most ceremonial of all ancient things—the very signs and instruments and embodiments of ceremonialism—are indiscriminately applied to the spiritual subjects and agents of Messiah. The temple, priests, and sacrifices, were the essence of Jewish ritualism, and we are said to be priests, and the temple, and sacrifices now.

You will find a *third* point of difference if you contemplate *the reasons and ends of the convocations of which we speak*.

Glance at the general characteristics of the Jewish celebrations. They were rather ends than means. They were the meeting of a demand—the payment of a due. Of course, not only so; in no state of human nature, and under no economy, could it be meant that men should rest in the mere compliance with religious rules; but there is a distinction. The public acknowledgments of the chosen people were very much complete things in themselves. The three festivals were grand state occasions. Their services constituted a national tribute. To bless God for the past, to make mention of his kind providence, to commemorate his loving interferences on their behalf, this was their design. And so they were retrospective—they looked back: what had been was their meaning. To keep up the remembrance of former things, to revive the impressions of events, to embalm a history, were they appointed. And the retrospect was to things outward and material. All the objects contemplated in the national gatherings were of this nature. The remem-

brance cherished and expressed was of external and secular blessings, preservation from death, local passages, good harvests. Blood, booths, provisional bounty, were the images that floated upon a Hebrew mind when mingling with the joyful throng of the ransomed people. And these services were national. The God worshipped—or rather God as he was worshipped—was the great and good Being that had called Abraham from idolatry, and made him the father of a numerous progeny; that had redeemed them by a strong hand and a stretched-out arm from captivity; that had interposed to rescue them from slaughter; that had guided and guarded them, by mercy and miracle, through a weary pilgrimage; that had put them into possession of a goodly land, and had caused his sun to shine and his rain to descend on them, filling their hearts with food and gladness. He was “the God of the Jews,” if not exclusively, yet chiefly; and this, his relation to them, assumed, in their view, a place inconsistent with his wider relations to the race. There were special causes to make it prominent and precious to their minds, but the character of their history and polity, acting on spirits of a narrow and carnal kind, made everything of that of which much might have been properly made, and the God of the Jews was, in their faith, “not also the God of the Gentiles.” Their annual convocations would have been, in any case, seasons of holy joy;—it is to be feared that they were made seasons of unholy pride;—and humble gratitude was hardly bestead, if not entirely excluded, by vindictive triumph.

Do you not see how perfect is the difference between these conventions of the ancient church and our assemblings in this great city? With the comprehensive charity of Him who, representing our whole humanity, disdains not to bless and save its meanest portion, the physical good of men is not forgotten, but still, as it should be, the main regard is paid to moral and religious interests. “Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel,” and in that light we read the solemn worth of human souls. What are all deliverances to the saving of a “people from their sins”? What are all dwel-

lings to the "everlasting habitations" which men are ever rearing for themselves, and which they must surely occupy? What are all harvests to the reaping of "corruption," and of "everlasting life?" The chief assemblings of the Church are prayers and protests for souls, recognitions of their worth, indications of their rights, efforts for their redemption; and they which are not so directly are so indirectly. The body stands as the material abode and organ of a deathless spirit. Knowledge is esteemed as giving a light in which the immortal workman may see to perform his awful task. Liberty is sought as affording ample room for the play of spiritual faculties, and fuller opportunities for the fulfilment of a mission most divine. And it is not man in any partial mood or state, not man as surveyed through a geographical or civil medium, that excites christian sympathy, but man in the simple elements of his nature, in the strict integrity of his being, in the common misery of his state, and the common grandeur of his destiny—man as a spirit and a sinner. "God hath made of one blood all nations," is the thrilling truth: "all souls are mine," is the loud claim of God: "all ye are brethren," is the pathetic appeal. "We know no man after the flesh," so far as the genius of our religion governs us; or, if special love is felt, it is for the specially distressed and despised, so far as we have "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." Nor are they vain affections that move us—mere sentimental longings that fill our hearts;—we meet for action. We have so learned God as not to suppose him pleased with mere hymns of praise and empty oblations, with gorgeous rites and pompous ceremonies. We are pledged to Him who "came to seek and to save;" and he who seeks most vigilantly, and saves most powerfully, is the best worshipper of the Father of Christ. And our eye is turned, while thus engaged, not towards the past, but towards the future. Hopes, not memories, fill our thoughts. We reach forth to that which is before. A bright vision is painted for us, a rich promise is given to us. All things are to be subjected to Christ. Toil is sweetened by the certainty of ultimate suc-

cess. We believe in it, and therefore work; believe in it, and therefore "the joy of the Lord is our strength." In faith we see the burden of men's many ills falling, like the pilgrims, at the sight of the cross; we see knowledge and wisdom as the stability of the times of Messiah; we see a spirit of wise and equal legislation treating power as a trust, and making it a blessing; we see the oppressor, in his right mind, bidding the slave from his knees, and saying, "Stand up, for I also am a man"; we see the toiling multitude no longer cursing labour, as if all things had not been gladdened and sanctified by the coming of the Lord. We may give the utmost licence to our imaginations, and, aided by the sayings and symbols of prophecy, may picture the scene when the whole earth shall be "the land of Emanuel," and be "filled with his glory"; when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them"; when every family shall be a "church in a house"; when "the bells of the horses" shall bear the same motto as the mitre of the priest; when there shall be a resurrection, if not of the martyrs, yet of their "spirit and power"; when science and philosophy shall be seen through Christianity as "the true light" of all things; when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ," the emblems, modes, and evidences of the reign of heaven; when living faith shall take the place of written creeds, and free love of form and fear; and

"Man, in the sunshine of the world's new spring,  
Shall walk in glory, like some holy thing."

Thus we see that, as distinguished from the great meetings among the Jews, our own are spiritual in their regards, practical in their purposes, universal in their relations, and prospective in their references; and, being so, they not unfitly nor feebly indicate the general character and spirit of the dispensation under which it is our happiness and glory to live.

The subject is fruitful of suggestions. We can mention but one or two.

May we not see in it *matter for devout acknowledgment?*

May we not ask, *What is the state of our souls in relation to this economy?* It is marked, and this enters into the essence of all that has been said, by its substantial nature. It is a bringing of good things to us—the life of all forms, the spirit of all bodies, the power of all instrumentalities. “Grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ.” Have we received them? do we rejoice in them? are we living them out? Have we liberty in place of bondage? spiritual holiness in place of ritual? universal love in place of national favoritism? the fulness of peace? the abundance of the joy of God’s salvation?

*Are we taking part, and our due part, in the great spiritual movements of the time?* I do not ask, Do you attend public meetings? That you may innocently decline to do—yea, praiseworthily. But do you delight in the spirit of the age which they reveal, and are you practically at one with that spirit? It is a great thing to live in a day of such earnest activity;—it is a greater thing to be fit to live in it.

REV. A. J. MORRIS, HOLLOWAY,

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Ninth.

“Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom,” &c.—Matt. xx. 20—28.

SUBJECT :—*The True and False in Greatness.*

GREATNESS is a word which represents a something for which all sigh and many strenuously struggle. To many it is the goal on the course—the idol in the temple of life. Of old the disciples on their way to Capernaum “disputed among



themselves who should be greatest." In this incident you have a key to not a little of the world's history. Much of social life is a tacit dispute with our compeers about greatness. Ambition is one of the most potent impulses in human souls: it pulsates through all circles;—works as really, though not a conspicuously, with the laborer on the soil and the mechanic in the shop, as with the statesman in the senate or the chieftain in the field. The ploughman who seeks to cut furrows more smooth and straight than his fellow on the neighboring acres, is as truly disputing for greatness as the political competitor for the suffrages of nations. The spade, the chisel, the pencil, and the pen, are as truly weapons in this social battle as the sword. Greatness is a common end—ambition is a common inspiration.

An indiscriminate reprobation of this principle would be easy, but not wise—might indicate zeal, but not knowledge. What is so universal must be instinctive, and what is instinctive must be divine. It is a force that God has put within us, and has therefore benevolent ends. In addition to this, we discover—what antecedently we might have inferred from its *innateness*—that Providence has made, in the sphere of each man's existence, ample scope for its operation. There is not one to whom the Creator has not given as well the capacity as the desire for distinction. Had all men the same kind and ratio of mental faculty and emotional impulse, and been placed in identical circumstances, is it not manifest that, however strong the desire for distinction, there could be no possibility of attaining it? In such a case, to see one man would be to see all. The face of society would be a monotonous plane, not an undulating scene. In broad contrast, however, with this is the fact. No two minds are either found alike in themselves, or identical in their circumstances; in each there is a difference, both in the faculties within and the forces without. Hence there is ample scope even for the feeblest, so to unfold his modicum of being as to arrest the attention, and awaken the approbation, of his contemporaries.

But while this love for distinction is not wrong in itself, from its *improper action* has ever sprung the most portentous

evils both to its possessor and his species. It has deadened the conscience, dried up the benevolent affections, turned the *social* man into a heartless tyrant—a national murderer—an incarnate demon. It has transformed that beautiful sympathetic nature—made by Infinite love, to weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice—into Alexanders and Napoleons, the curse of their own age, and the accursed of posterity.

If so much depends upon the development of this common force, is it not natural to expect that, in a moral revelation from God, we should have distinct direction as to the right laws of its action? and is it not supremely important that, if such direction is given, we should pay to it the most earnest regard? Christianity gives us such information. Jesus, in his teaching, legislated for the varied instincts of our spiritual constitution, a fact which at once proves the divinity of his mission, and gives to his system an incomparable value.

In the interesting narrative before us, we have the most unmistakable directions concerning this native love of greatness—this ambition. We have here *false* and *true* greatness illustrated. The conduct of the disciples reveals the former, and the address of Jesus the latter.

The conduct of the disciples suggests several things which must ever mark false greatness.

*First. That it is selfish.* The mother is here represented as seeking exaltation for her sons. In Mark, she is not mentioned. They are the direct applicants; but whether they applied through the medium of their parent or not, the request was theirs, and self-aggrandizement was the idea. The mother thought only of her sons, and they thought only of themselves; even the claims of their ten brethren were overlooked. To be raised to power, to sit on the right and left hand of Christ, and receive the reverence of men, was at present their master-thought. *Self* has ever been the primal idea of the world's great man.

“Fain would he make the world his pedestal,  
Mankind the gazers, the sole figure he.”

But, vain man, how false thy motive! I lay it down as an incontrovertible principle that *greatness can never be obtained from selfish motives*. Little motives can never make great men. He who is under the sway of self-interest is on the declining, not in the advancing, scale. The self-seeking disposition enervates the moral powers, and eats as a canker into the very stamina of our manhood. You may as well expect luxuriant crops to start from untilled deserts, as to expect the highest powers of your nature to grow and flourish in the soil and atmosphere of a selfish heart. Disinterestedness is the soul of greatness.

*Secondly. It is external.* "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." Their notions of Christ's kingdom were purely material: they thought of it in connexion with all the pomp and pageantry of an earthly sovereignty, that should shiver the sceptre of the Cæsars—make Jerusalem the empress of the world—rear for her a throne on the ruins of mighty empires; that should govern all peoples, and flourish through all periods. From what he had just said to them about his resurrection, they thought that the hour of this illustrious power was on the dawn, and they now ambitiously sought to participate in its splendor. So grovelling and gross was their idea of greatness, that they looked for it without, not within. Ever, indeed, has this notion prevailed, and over the wide world does it reign to this hour; and yet there shall not be found a thinking man who will stand up and seriously defend it. No! The unsophisticated common-sense of humanity declares, what all history proves, that the true greatness of man is not in externalisms, however magnificent and dazzling. Purple robes, elevated offices, territorial possessions, armorial insignia, high-sounding titles, mitres, coronets, crowns—can any or all of these attach greatness to a human soul? Ask me, can the paint of the artist add to the natural beauties of the landscape? Can a spark increase the lustre of the great sun?

*Thirdly. It is unreflective.* "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." It was an unreasoning

impulse of ambition that dictated their request. Had they duly considered the nature of that kingdom of which he had often spoken to them, the sufferings which he told them awaited both him and his followers, and the sublime ideas of greatness which he often presented to their attention, never would they have made such an application as this.

Have not false notions of greatness ever been traceable to the want of reflection? In whatever path we meet men in search of worldly distinction, we may address them in Christ's language, and say, "Ye know not what ye ask." Are you seeking greatness from *worldly riches*—endeavouring to amass wealth, and to become a man of princely fortune? You know not what you ask, my brother. Reflect, and you will find that whilst wealth cannot make you great, it may expose you to

The loudest laugh of hell—the pride of dying rich.

Are you seeking greatness from *worldly honors*—striving to get that before which men will kneel in servile homage, and for which they will ring your name on the loud trumpet of applause? Still "ye know not what ye ask." Reflect, and you will find that the world's highest eulogiums cannot add a "jot or tittle" of greatness to your *being*. Man is not great because the world votes him so. The wild dreams of the old astrologers did not less affect the peaceful stars than do the laudations or denunciations of the world the real greatness of *the man*. Before serious reflection the world's lustre grows dim, and the world's famed heroes fall from their lofty pedestals.

*Fourthly. It is dissocializing.* "And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." The amity and concord of society must ever require the recognition of general rights, and the display of general sympathy. It is not in man to be harmonious with those who infringe his rights, and disregard his interest. False greatness respects no rights, and regards no interests but its own. Its temper is proud, overbearing, monopolistic. Self is its divinity—a divinity so great, that earth has no oblation too precious for its shrine. Ere now, mighty cities have flamed as

holocausts to this implacable god. Such a spirit as this must ever tend to loosen the foundations of social order. It is like that *wind* of which an old Hebrew spoke, which produces whirlwind. Ah, me! what desolating and confounding *whirlwinds* have sprung up in society from this *wind* of false greatness. As the spirit of the two disciples now angered the ten, so the ambition of the few has, from the beginning, socially disturbed, and oftentimes enraged, the many.

Such are some of the ideas which this incident suggests about false greatness. Let us proceed now to the address of Jesus, in order to ascertain something of the nature of *true* greatness. I remark—

*First. That Christ-like suffering is the condition of true greatness.* “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” You are seeking greatness when you should be expecting suffering. “Are you prepared to participate in the sufferings that await me?” This appeal of Christ struck at once at the *root* of their vain ambition, and intimated the connexion subsisting between suffering and glory. Jesus does not say, there is no throne before you; he leaves them in its anticipation: but he does assure them that suffering like his must first come. In the writings of the apostles, the principle here suggested, that Christ-like suffering is the condition of human glory, is stated with precision, enforced with power, and repeated with frequency. We read of being “crucified with Christ,” of being “buried with Christ,” and of being “made conformable unto his death.” The meaning of all this is obvious; it is not that we are to endure the agonies or the specific forms of suffering that He endured, but that we are to have ever that SELF-SACRIFICING spirit, of which his sufferings were the effects and expressions. This is the “fellowship with his suffering;” this is the drinking of his cup, and the being baptized with his baptism; and this is the necessary condition of true greatness. Would you get high up to the moral throne of Christ, and share in the sublime honors of his spiritual empire? You must have that indomitable sympathy



with the cause of truth, right, and God, which would impel you, if need be, to sacrifice property, ease, comfort, and life itself, for its sake—a sympathy under whose influence *self-seeking* is crucified and buried, and the soul “filled with all the fulness of God.” This is the basis of all true nobility. Without this spirit man can never display those attributes which the conscience of society honors, the universe applauds, and the great God approves.

*Secondly. God is the source of true greatness.* “To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.” This language fully expresses the idea that God hath prepared greatness for men. Indeed, all good emanates from the Father. He is the primal Fountain of our being and blessing. The things he hath “prepared” may be divided into two classes—the *given* and the *gained*—those that are bestowed unconditionally, and those that are reached as the results of conditions. Light, air, water, existence, with its varied powers and natural relationships, Jesus, and the Bible, are of the former class. They are all conferred, not procured. Luxuriant crops, mental discipline, intellectual knowledge, moral character, are of the latter class. In the nature of things, they are reached only as the results of certain human operations. *Greatness* is one of the blessings that the Father hath prepared in this conditional way: men can only obtain it from the Father as the agriculturist gets his crops, or the scholar his knowledge—*by fitting agency*. This explanation serves two purposes: it shows that they “for whom it is prepared” are they who properly attend to the settled conditions for acquiring it; and it shows that there is a deep truth underlying the expression of Jesus, it “is not mine to give.” It cannot be *directly* given. It is like knowledge—it must come as the result of individual effort. Did the true dignity of man consist in being robed in splendor, or fed on luxuries; in being lifted to high civic offices; having titles appended to the name, or an imperial crown encircling the brow, it might be given;—the outward hand of patronage could confer the boon. It has often done so—often made civic peers

of intellectual and moral plebeians, political sovereigns of mental and spiritual serfs. But consisting, as it does, in the exaltation of *soul*, in wealth of thought, and generous sympathy, and spiritual impulse—in a sublime inward energy to think without prejudice, to love without lust, to will without selfishness, and to follow duty with a brave heart, ever “making melody” to God,—it can only be attained by the strivings of a personal agency. No one can carry thee up the “holy hill” of true greatness. Thou must climb its heights thyself—thou must weave thine own crown—rear thine own throne. The “Father hath prepared” them for thee, but they must be wrought out of and by the powers he has given thee.

*Thirdly. Social usefulness is the manifestation of true greatness.* “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” In the kingdoms of the world, men are considered great in proportion to the number that yield to their authority, and minister to their wishes and their wants. Hence, to break down the individual independency of men, and reduce them to mere instruments to be wielded at pleasure, has ever been the aim and effort of the ambitious and the proud. The antithesis of this is true greatness. Its measure is not determined by the numbers that servilely attend on us, *but rather by the numbers that we benevolently attend upon.* The path of greatness is not that over which the Cæsars in proud daring rode, but that over which, with humble mien and world-wide love, the Howards pursued their self-denying course ;—its mission is to minister, not to master—to give, not to govern. Its sceptre is love, not force ; its throne is in the heart, and its empire over souls.

*Fourthly. Jesus Christ is the model of true greatness.* “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but

to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Though the reputed Son of an obscure mechanic of Nazareth—though he lived on the bounty of others, had no home in his suffering life, and scarcely a friend in his ignominious death—though despised and rejected of men, a "Man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief," still he was sublimely great—great in all the attributes of goodness and power. He was great in the spotless purity of his character, in the unconquerable energy of his love, in the invincibility of his will, and in his spiritual identification with the heart and plans of the Infinite Father. Under the miserable and tattered garb of worldly indigence and social degradation, his greatness was seen. He wept over the poverty of the opulent, and over the degradation of kings. His contemporaries saw his moral majesty peering through his mean externalism. The populace saw it on his way to Jerusalem, "lowly, and riding upon an ass," and they fell in reverence, and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Pilate saw it as he stood a prisoner at his bar, and, after pronouncing the wicked sentence, washed his hands in the open court, and declared, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." The Roman ruffians saw it under the pale moon in Gethsemane, and fell as dead to the ground. The centurion saw it sitting in majesty on his bleeding brow as he hung upon the cross, and "feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Here, amidst the deepest poverty and greatest suffering, is the greatness I call on you to imitate—the true greatness of man. Would you become a great painter? Take the pencil, and study some Titian. Or a great sculptor? Take the chisel, and study another Phidias. Or a great poet? Take the pen, and study a Milton or a Wordsworth. But if you would become a *great man*, take the *heart*, and study CHRIST. Look at him until, with emphasis, you can call riches dust, worldly splendors toys, worldly titles idle dreams; and until you feel that the true glory of man is "the glory which shall be revealed IN us."

Worldly glories are but as bubbles on the troubled stream of time—we touch them, and they burst; are but as clouds without water in the sky of life—though fringed with the golden beams of the setting sun, vanish into thinnest air ere the morning dawn. Ah! that morning—that morning!

“Some sink outright:

O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;

To-morrow knows not they were ever born.

Others a short memorial leaves behind,

Like a flag floating when the bark's ingulfed,—

It floats a moment, and is seen no more;—

One Cæsar lives—a thousand are forgot.”

### Analysis of Homily the Tenth.

“Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name: that strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.”—*Amos* v. 8, 9.

THE author of this sublime language says of himself—“I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.” Here is another instance of the fact, that God generally calls men in humblest life to the sublimest offices in his kingdom. Few facts are more plenial with healthy and practical suggestions than this. It shows that God respects men not on the ground of their circumstances, but of their capacities; that men in the obscurest walks of life have souls able both to receive and express God's communications to their race; and that men should not be deterred from teaching because they are poor, nor should

others despise their instructions on that ground. The question should ever be with the "hearer," not *who* is the man, but *what* is his doctrine. The hand of secular poverty has ever conferred the largest treasures—intellectual and moral wealth—upon the world.

These words reveal two things:—

I. The connexion which God has with his universe. He is here represented in relation to two distinct provinces—the *creating* and *governing*. He "maketh the seven stars (the Pleiades) and Orion." All the stars, constellations, and systems, were made by him. He rounded them in his hand, brightened them with his glory, tenanted them with his creatures, and poised them in their spheres. But the prophet refers to these *particularly*, because of the influence they were supposed to exercise over nature. The one constellation rising, as it did, in the spring of the year, when all nature was bursting into new life, emitting sweetest influences from every blade and shrub and tree; and the other rising generally in the autumn, when the earth throws off her beauteous costume, binds up her fountains of life and sweet fragrances in the cold bands of frost;—were regarded by the ancient heathen as having the government of these two important seasons of the year—being the gods presiding over them. In the light of this fact, Jehovah's address to Job has great significance. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades"—prevent nature from outpouring her sweet influences of vernal life under this constellation, "or loose the bands of Orion?"—the mighty band of frost that girts the globe under the wintry force of this constellation.

But he is not only spoken of as having made these constellations, but as *ever governing* both in *nature* and in *human history*. He "turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night." The reference is manifestly to the diurnal revolution of day and night. Night truly may be called the shadow of death: it is an impressive symbol of that dark event which awaits us all, when we shall lie down



to sleep in the mansion of mortality until the morning. He "calletth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth:" he causeth the waters to ascend from the fountains of the deep, condenses them into clouds, and distils them in refreshing dew and rain upon the barren earth. Thus the revolution of day and night, and the changes of the weather, are here ascribed to his agency. In this semi-philosophic age, such operations as these are referred to "laws of nature," a phrase which is not only a cover for scientific ignorance, but a veil concealing God from nature. True philosophy teaches me to find an *adequate* cause for all the effects I discover. In these "laws," the mere abstraction of the human brain, do you find such a cause for the phenomena of night and day, the evaporation and distillation of waters, here referred to? In the words of Christ you have the true philosophy. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

But the prophet speaks of God as presiding not only in nature, but also in *human history*. "That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress;" or, as Dr. Henderson renders it, "that bringeth destruction suddenly upon the mighty; and destruction cometh upon the fortress." God is in human history: he originates the good, he controls the evil. Divine influence is not limited to churches. The springs of all souls are in his hand, and he acts upon them at pleasure. Such, briefly, is the idea which the prophet here gives us of God's connexion with the universe. The world is neither left to chance, nor to the iron sway of fate, but it is under the constant control of the ALL-WISE, ALL-POWERFUL, and ALL-KIND.

II. The connexion which man should have with God. "Seek him," &c., a phrase of frequent use in the Bible to express the duty of *seeking friendship* with God.

SUBJECT:—*The Glory of Religion.*

Religion is friendship with "Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion," &c., and it must, therefore, involve the sublimest

ideas of glory. There are two thoughts suggested, tending to illustrate the glory of a religious life.

I. That the process of reaching this friendship is sublime. The mind has to turn itself away from all that is empty, earthly, and transient in life, to the greatest reality in the universe—God. It is an effort to gain not a world, but the world's Maker—not to participate in certain streams of pleasure, but to reach the very fountain. Several ideas are implied in the effort:—1st. Faith in God's personal existence—a belief that "He is." Friendship has to do with personal qualities. A non-personal God is no God. Pantheism is but another word for Atheism. 2nd. A consciousness of moral distance from that God. We should not seek that which we possess. Man's moral alienation from God is a fact, the personal *sense* of which is essential to the first step in seeking. 3rd. A felt necessity of friendship with God. 4th. An assurance that his friendship can be obtained. The DOCTRINE and ATONEMENT of Christ attest this. Such is the high work to which Amos here calls the Israelites. Were the infidel to ask us what we require of him, we would not say, as has too often been said in effect, adopt our views, embrace our system, join our sect, for, he may say,—and peradventure, well and truly—I can do better; but we would say, My friend, seek *Him*—our common God—that made "the seven stars and Orion." Although he might be intellectually our superior, the sublimity of our idea, if he saw us in earnest, would disarm him of prejudice, and probably command his attention and respect. The position of the minister who, with a Christ-like spirit, points men to the sublime in nature, and calls them intelligently to seek Him that made all, is indeed a glorious one.

II. That the blessings involved in this friendship are transcendent. Of all blessings, friendship is the greatest. Its worth, however, is always proportioned to the characteristics of the friend. A friend is always valuable according to his measure of the following qualities:—1. *Quickening genius*. An impulse to arouse the mind to the use and development of

its faculties, is a great desideratum. Some have a much greater power of imparting *mental proclivity* than others. The friend is the most valuable who has it to the greatest extent. The mind of God is *life*. "He quickeneth all things,"

2. *Moral excellence*. By a law of our nature we assimilate to our friends. It is hence important that their moral attributes be holy and true. "God is light; in Him there is no moral darkness at all."

3. *Capacity to help*. We are dependent creatures—we rely on friends. It is, therefore, important that they have all the power to meet our expectations and exigencies; otherwise there must come disappointment and distress. God has everything we need, or ever can require. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all," &c.

Ye *sneering sceptics*, who pronounce our religion a thing for the superstitious and the emasculate, let me tell you what it is. It is not the liturgies you despise, nor the "psalm-singing" you ridicule, nor the hierarchisms you contemn. It is something before all these—something independent of all these, and transcendently higher. It is friendship with Him that made "the seven stars and Orion." Ye *proud ecclesiastics*, who seek to enforce the musty traditions ye have received from the fathers upon others, and fulminate denunciations upon all beyond your narrow pale, let me tell you that the true religion of humanity is something sublimer than your notions, and independent of your systems. It is friendship with Him that made "the seven stars and Orion." Ye *dreamy transcendentalists*, who revel in "cloud-land," din us with your myths and intuitions, write our Bible down as the fable of legendary ages, and pronounce its disciples the dupes of superstition, let me tell you that, amidst the loftiest soaring of your speculative intellect, you have nothing half so truly transcendent as the essence of our religion—friendship with Him that made "the seven stars and Orion." If there be grandeur in the universe, it is with that man who walks under these constellations, and feels a *holy oneness* with Him, of whose mind the universe is the effect, servant, and symbol; moral identity, with the *force of all forces*, the *spirit of all spirits*, the *glory of all glories*!

### Analysis of Homily the Eleventh.

"In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession."—Lev. xxv. 13.

SUBJECT:—*The Jubilee; or, the Degenerative and Corrective Forces of Society.*

THE institution of the Jewish jubilee teaches us two great facts, which all classes of the community should thoughtfully ponder and practically recognise.

I. *That the degenerative forces of society are in itself.* Here is a Divine expedient for meeting evils into which it was foreseen that society would fall, every fifty years. These evils are DEBT—SLAVERY—POVERTY—and MATERIALISM.

II. *That the corrective forces of society are from God.* He interposed periodically with the Jews to *absolve the debtor, manumit the slave, enrich the poor, and check the materialistic tendency* of the toiling population, by giving a whole year in every seventh for physical rest and spiritual thought and service. The *corrective* truths taught by this Divine interposition are—

1. *That man is superior to property.* By dissolving the relation between creditor and debtor, master and slave, God declared that the *debtor* was more valuable than the *debt*, the slave more valuable than the secular claims of his master. The poorest porter in your warehouse is greater than all your "stock in trade," the poorest cottager on your estate than all your acres, however prolific or numerous. The violation of this truth is the ruin of society, and it is violated every day. *Man, in society, is held cheap in comparison with property.* This is our curse.

2. *That God is the disposer of property.* His putting an end to the claims of the *creditor, master, and landowner*, indicates this. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

3. *That society has higher wants than property.* *Earthly labor was checked*, and a period given for spiritual services. What suggestions would the trumpet of jubilee wake up in the heart of Judea! The old would feel,—When I heard that blast before, I was a child in the hands of my father, or on the bosom of my mother. My parents are in their graves, and when this trump shall sound again I shall be sleeping in the dust with them, &c., &c.

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## The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 48.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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3. *They sought truth under Divine direction.* They saw a star in the east, which “went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.” What is this star? In this question, biblical speculators have found ample scope for the play of their imagination, and some have given us a comet, some a planet, some a meteor, some a constellation, and some a flaming Seraph speeding his flight through the blue air. Some, indeed, conjecture—and if we have a choice, we prefer their hypothesis—that the mystic light, the well-known symbol of deity that flamed on the sword of the Cherubims “at the east of the garden of Eden,” burnt in the bush of Moses, irradiated the guiding pillar of Israel, gleamed for ages over the mercy-seat, shone around Christ in the baptism, and

spread over him a lustrous canopy on the Mount of Transfiguration,—now appeared in the starry realm, signalized itself amongst the “bright ones,” and thus arrested the attention and guided the feet of these men of astrologic notions, in their wondrous march to Bethlehem. But, somehow, we feel no solicitude in this question. The *what* here proves nothing—suggests nothing; the *why* is everything, and the *why* we know. That “star” was *God’s guide* to these eastern inquirers. Thus it is ever with spirits that are in earnest quest after truth. The “Great Jehovah” will guide them. It is a law “settled in heaven,” that he that seeks shall find: to him there is promised ONE that “shall lead into all truth.” Let those vigorous spirits of this age, who have out-thought much of the old, and are leaving it, as these “wise men” left their homes, in search of something else, be fervent and faithful, be diligent and devout, and on their intellect shall rise, erewhile, some Divine idea that, like the “star,” shall guide them to Bethlehem, where dwells the LOGOS. 4. *They sought it to render it homage.* “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” These symbols of respect they carried with them. They left not their home from idle curiosity, nor did they come to Bethlehem to dispute the claims of the Babe-King, but to “worship.” *Reverence* mingled with their inquisitiveness, and inspired them in their discovery; they bore its fragrant symbols in their every step upon the road, and they expressed it in “the treasures” they adoringly presented to that *Majesty* they discovered in the *humble* home of Mary. He who would search successfully for truth must do likewise. Many now-a-day, under the garb of *truth-seekers*, seek rather their own intellectual aggrandizement and popularity. They have no idea of rendering homage to *objective* truth; everything must bow to their *imperial intuitions*. On their intellectual march they are ambitious and self-confident, not “meek and lowly.” Their spirit is not fragrant with reverence; they carry not,



as these magi did, the “frankincense and myrrh” of loyal devotion, for they are in search of a kingdom, not a king. Truth can never be obtained thus;—it must be sought with a reverent spirit, and for reverent ends, to be found. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear [*reverence*] him, and he will show them his covenant.”

Wouldst thou get truth, my brother?—understand something of those everlasting principles which light up the universe, as the Shekinah of old lumined the bush in Midian? Be *reverent*; first feel that all about thee is sacred—awfully sacred. “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Then listen, and thou shalt hear something sublimer than ever fell on the ear of Moses.

We proceed now to another class here represented.

II. Those who rest in the letter of the truth. These are figured in the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. “And when he [Herod] had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him In Bethlehem, of Judea; for thus it is written by the Prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” There are three very remarkable things discoverable here:—1st. The *general expectation* of the Messiah’s coming. The demand of Herod, and the conduct of this “full session of the sanhedrim,”\* proceed on a common and undisputed *pre-notion* of the fact. Whence this concurrent sentiment in the world’s heart relating to an event perfectly unique? Ah! whence? 2nd. A literal fulfilment of an old prophecy. Although these letter-religionists did not quote *verbatim* the passage, their languages convey the essential meaning; and the meaning is that obscure Bethlehem should be celebrated and honored as the birth place of the Messiah. This prediction of Micah, uttered upwards of seven

\* Bibliotheca Sacra, No. 1.

centuries before, now met with its complete accomplishment. How is this to be explained? I ask the impugnors of inspiration *how*? 3rd. An accurate scriptural knowledge where there was no *spiritual* life. These men were familiar with the writings of Moses and the prophets; the rubric of the temple was ever on their lips. They had their own interpretations of the law, and crossed seas and land to spread them. But notwithstanding all this knowledge of the letter—yes, and their interest in it too—notoriously wanting were they in that spirit of universal love, and those principles of everlasting truth and right, for the inworking of which, to human hearts, “God spoke unto the fathers by the prophets.” Sacred VERBALITY was their religion. They lived in *words*—their whole moral being, that should have winged the wide realms of truth, shrunk into the cold and narrow shell of words—they looked at God, humanity, and the universe, through *words*; and through this misty medium, the sublime LOGOS appeared to them a *heretic* unworthy of their country—unworthy of life.

Have these no antitypes in other places and times? Are such characters extinct? Were they confined to Judea, or did they die out with the last breath of the Jewish commonwealth? No; on every subsequent page of ecclesiastical history they appear, and often play a prominent part. We have them amongst us to this day—not their lingering shadow, but their living substance. In politics, they contend far more for “constitutions” and “precedents” than for the eternal principles of justice, equity, and order—more for that which man has written on parchment or paper, than that which God has written on the moral soul of society—“the common law.” In churches, far more solicitous are they for “catechism” and “creeds,” orders, and the technicalities of truth, than for the *spirit* that was in Christ Jesus. They will labor more to defend a Greek particle, or expound a Hebrew point, than to reclaim a wandering soul. When will this miserable blighting spirit of *Jewish verbality* depart. Ah! when?

(*To be continued.*)

# A HOMILY

ON

## The Great Assimilation; or, Man Christianized.

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“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” &c.—Rom. viii. 1—17.

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NATURE, Judaism, and Christianity, are the great powers which form distinct types of character, on the broadest scale. Under each of these objective revelations, man develops his generic intuitions, intellective faculties, and spiritual affections, in very different degrees. Once man was under the sole tuition of nature; once he saw not only elegance in every structure, beauty in every form, grace in every movement, but God in every object, and every object in God. But since the day that he withdrew his spirit from the Divine, and retired within his dark self, he has been under the impulsive force of a downward tendency. He not only fell, but in this state of insulation he continued to fall, from sin to sin, from woe to woe. The men of philosophic habit, who were unblessed with an authenticated revelation, were unable to rise to the conceptions of a pure Being. They traced all phenomena to a dead principle, not to a conscious mind—to a thing, not to a personality. Nature, which had no eye to see, no ear to hear, no heart to feel, and no hand to help, was converted into a God. So terrible was the process of demoralization, that thrones and temples were reared to falsehood the most vile, and vice the most loathsome. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteous-

ness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse : because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves : who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." This is man in his abnormal state, that state which is so often eulogized by the poets of fancy and folly.

Man, in fellowship with Judaism, moved in an inner and a higher circle. What advantage had the Jew ? Much. But the chief was the possession of God's oracles : he was admitted into a closer communion with God. While the Gentile was in the outer court, he was in the sanctuary. The Divine ideas had a pictorial embodiment in Judaism as well as in nature, but they were seen in the one much more clearly and specifically than in the other. That old Hebrew polity, strange and unmeaning as it may appear to some, was a most significant and wonderful institute. Like a majestic pyramid, there it stood in the world's desert ; the inscriptions, in conspicuous characters, engraven upon it, could not escape the eye of the passer-by. "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" "*I am the Lord thy God.*" "*Visiting iniquity.*" "*Showing mercy.*" "*Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me.*" According to the teachings of the heathen schools, the universe had existed from eternity, or had been created by blind and opposing forces. According to these

Maker. Elsewhere, men were directed to worship all manner of objects—yea, their own fantasies and depravities were converted into divinities ;—here men were directed to adore and to obey one Being. The oneness of the Deity was intended and calculated to produce moral oneness in men ; His spirituality to check their theoretical and practical materialism ; His holiness and grace to awake the world to reflection, and to guard it against despair. The unveiling of a moral God to the world was the grand mission of Judaism. God the Holy, God the Happy, was its true Shekinah. How simple its theology ! how pure its morality ! how lofty its faith !

According to historical order and to this epistolary document, man is next viewed in fellowship with Christianity—man in Christ, or, the converse, Christ in man, is the fundamental idea of this much-read and much-loved portion of apostolic scripture. Four things are predicated in this passage of man in spiritual communion with Christ.

I. MAN IN CHRIST IS FREED FROM SIN. A clear conception of sin is of the first moment. If our knowledge of sin be defective, our knowledge of Christianity must be so too. The Pantheistic doctrine, which has been up and down in the world from the beginning, seeks to confound all moral distinctions—to represent man's actions as the necessary and innocent working out of his constitutional laws. Thus the existence of sin is theoretically denied. Man, however, knows and feels that there is such a thing as sin ; no sophistry, no speculative reasoning, can extinguish his consciousness of guilt. Sin, as developed in revelation, perfectly accords with human consciousness. What is sin ? It is "the transgression of law." Look at the organic and inorganic creations around you. Can you find a bird which has abandoned its instinct, or a flower which has rejected its aliment, or a star which has broken loose from its laws ? But look higher ; man, who is endowed with the power of thought, of volition, of feeling, and of sympathy with the great God—man, who is raised into a region of being where happiness the most pure and truth the most lovely can be enjoyed, *sins*. There is an appointed path

for man—for him in common with the holy beings of all ages and worlds ; but he wanders therefrom. He was made for a specific object and a happy destination, but he falls short of that end. He was made under law, but he deviates from it. The measure of light which a man has at any given time, through the conscientious improvement of all means within his reach, is the law by which he should walk ; deviation from that law is sin ; and sin, by its inherent and malignant power, involves punishment. The transgressor, like a malefactor, is arraigned before an internal and moral tribunal, which is a pledge and forerunner of eternal retribution. The men who act in opposition to their primal perceptions, to the decalogue, or to Christianity, are self-condemned, “their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another.”

The great inquiry of the world has been, How can man be freed from an accusing conscience, and from the law of sin ? All temples, synagogues, mosques, and churches, have recognised the momentousness of the question. The struggles of expiring victims—the deep groans of humanity—have borne it aloft to the throne of the Eternal. The Eternal himself has deigned to solve the difficulty, and to answer the inquiry ; his expressed and explicit utterance upon the subject is our only infallible guide. Though man is not freed from sin as a matter of recollection, for, as a fact in his personal history, he never can forget it—though man is not freed from its natural sequences, for these the wisest and holiest of men endure in animal sufferings and the ravages of death—though man is not freed from it indiscriminately and unconditionally—the doctrine of the universalist is as opposed to the testimony of reason as it is to the testimony of revelation. Still, in the highest sense, he is freed—consciously and progressively freed—freed from the evil forces that enchain his being—freed to rise to altitudes far transcending those from which he fell. God loved man not merely as he was, nor as he will be, but as *he is* ; yea, man the sinner, man the sufferer, man the condemned, is an object of Divine pity ; but when he comes to God as a



repentant believer, for in what other capacity can he come?—with spontaneity and alacrity God approves of his conduct. His relations to God, eternity, and the universe, become new. The universe, eternity, and God, secure his well-being. Futurity throws open its portals, and offers him a happy home. The totality of life's events work out his good, and God says to him, "Thou shalt have not only mine, but ME."

Moreover, freedom from the condemnation and from the law of sin, are indissolubly connected, and this twofold freedom is effected by the redeeming agency of Christ. Christ, in the entirety of his history, is condemnatory and utterly destructive of all sin. Let a man be in spiritual communion with Christ, and with the certainty and uniformity of law his sin shall be destroyed. There is no law in yonder heavens, nor on this wide earth, more effectual than this. Fellowship with Christ, and fellowship with sin, are absolutely incongruous. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death." "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." No being but Christ can hush the moral thunders which rumble in the conscience; no sacrifice but his can teach the tremendous evil of sin—no power but his can burst the bonds of evil habits—no spirit but his can engage the heart's affections, and restore them to the right object.

II. MAN IN CHRIST IS ADVANCED IN MORAL EXCELLENCY—he realizes the true idea of *Divine holiness*. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." The law is a transcript of the moral and transcendent excellency of the Divine nature. That excellency is no longer an abstraction—a shadow; it is drawn out into real life. Man's heart becomes its abode; it becomes the living, moving principle within. Jesus of Nazareth was created and employed by the Eternal Spirit to reveal to us the holy law of being, and to supply us with motives to act up, uniformly and habitually, to our sense of duty. His holiness is not among the in-

digenous conceptions of the human mind. Among these we find Roman bravery, Grecian beauty, Stoic passivity, and Pharisaical sanctity ; but no Christian holiness. Christ is our "sanctification." He produces in the man who is in spiritual fellowship with him the holiness of which he himself is the ideal and exemplar.

*He minds the Spirit.* "But they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." Man in Christ attends to the interests of all spirits. The Divine Spirit speaks, and he attends to what is said. *He* attends to the spirits of men—to their education, freedom, rectitude, and happiness. *He* attends to *his* own Spirit—to *its* moral temper and aim ; bows to *its* sovereignty ; walks according to *its* enlightened dictates.

*He has a peaceful life.* "But to be spiritually minded is life and peace." He is not exempt from chafing cares and moral conflicts ; still, life in Christ is not a narrow, depressed, and cheerless thing. No ; it is life in its fullest and freest, serenest and richest, form. Christian obedience is not compulsion, but spontaneous action. Prayer is not the reluctant homage of a slave to his tyrant, but the sweet converse of a right-hearted child with his Parent. The life which man subjectively realizes in Christ is circumscribed within no narrow bounds. Christianity, by the truthful spirit which it engenders, leads men out to the whole system of being. It has given new life to our world : adamant barriers, which frowned defiance, have been surmounted. To every Newton who traverses the stars—to every Humboldt who strives after a conception of the universe as an organic whole—to every Paul who ponders the deep mysteries of theology—to every Christian who aspires after higher knowledge and nobler attainments—it says, "Well done, good and faithful servants ; enter into the joys" of new truths. The Christian already has real life and much happiness : he has the prospect of their continuance—yea, of their increase.

*He has the spirit of Christ.* "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you : now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Spirit of God and the Spirit

of Christ are the same. The most elevated and sublime idea we have of spirit is in reference to God. God is spirit, intellect, heart. He *thinks—wills—feels*. The thoughts and emotions of the Deity, clothed in words, are called Spirit. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” The moral disposition which these produce in man is spirit. Doctrines, doubtless, there are which have an adaptation to form and to sustain the spirit of Christ; still they are but means to an end—to the formation of character, on the model given by Christ. Let us, who glory in evangelical religion—in the free, full, and everlasting clemency of the Deity—remember that mercy alone is not enough. Men may cry for mercy from mere selfishness; they may be anxious only about passively receiving mercy; no man would wish to leave this world without an opportunity of asking for mercy in some way or other. Now, a Christian earnestly and supremely seeks mercy, and obtains it; but he does more than that—he seeks to become like Christ. Let those who glory in doctrinal theology, and launch their anathemas against all who echo not their Shibboleth, who trust in the church, saying, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these,” and who adopt as their motto, “No salvation out of the pale of the visible church”—awake out of their awful delusions, and abandon their Jesuitical knavery. “For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Give us a man who has the Spirit of Christ, whether he worships in an oriental temple or British cathedral—in a thatched cottage, or a rustic barn—on the mountain’s brow or on the ocean’s wave;—there is the true worshipper, the true offering, and the true God.

III. MAN IN CHRIST IS DESTINED TO FUTURE GLORIFICATION. “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness: But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Though he is freed from sin, and advanced in spiritual excel-

lency, still he must die. The law of death has never been arrested—never repealed: it was left to take its course. Though man is born to die, he dies to live. Death in Christ—for to this alone the apostle refers—is a destruction antecedent to reproduction. It is a birth. It is one of a series of changes in our endless history. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” In the case of Christ himself, death was the condition of a higher life: he passed through the grave on his way to immortality. The mind must die to one life to live another; it must renounce one set of ideas and dispositions to embrace higher ones. All around us seem to be the germs of the future. The seed swells, and bursts into life; the well-known larva sinks in mortal throes, and again rises and soars, a beautiful and lively object, in the summer sky; falling empires yield up materials for their successors. The globe’s history is made up of destruction and reproduction: the child is but the germ of the man, and the christianized man is the germ of a higher intelligence. The future—the future is everything to man. We can almost spare the past: we look at our infancy, and find it a blank—at our childhood and our youth, and we are pained at their follies and perversities; but we cannot spare the future—our long-wished perfectibility is there—our God is there; it is our heaven. Hail!—hail to the glorious future!

Man in the future is the continuation of man in the present. The octogenarian is the continuous growth of the new-born babe. In like manner, man in heaven is the continuation of man on earth. Hereafter he will appear an entire man—greatly improved, better conditioned, marvellously sublimated—still a man. He is now in a tent that rocks before the storm—becomes dilapidated—the rough elements beat upon the sensitive inhabitant, but he shall go forth, and enter into “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” The dwelling is changed, but the inhabitant continues—the mortal garment is cast aside, and the immortal is put on, but the wearer is the same. Yes; the conscious moral man remains

unchanged amidst ceaseless changes. Whatever dies, this lives. From the ashes of his present abode shall be evolved a structure the most ethereal and glorious, powerful and durable. The principle of life casts off its exuviae, and constructs other and higher organisms. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Perhaps there is not a Christian who is free from all unbelief and gloom, which oftentimes have their root in the frailties of physical existence. A resolute exercise of mind in Christian truth, founded upon the moral affinity of the mind to the truth itself, is indispensable to rise above them. Though the constitution of the universe indicates a future—though our hearts hope it—it is Christ alone that establishes it. Christ's existence, word, and spirit, guarantee our glorification.

IV. HE IS DESTINED TO ENJOY THE GLORY WHICH BELONGS TO CHRIST HIMSELF. "Joint-heirs with Christ." "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The biblical theory respecting the future of the Christian, though unrevealed in its details, is clearly brought to light in its broad outlines. If all its glories were shown, the Christian pilgrim would be impatient of the slow-paced movements of time. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "Looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Whatever glory may belong to Christ, or to whatever glory he may be destined, the same is in reserve for his disciples. Amazing prospect! To be *like* Christ! To be with Christ! O Immanuel! thou art dear to our hearts by ten thousand ties. We love to think of thee. We love to read thy story on earth. We rejoice to learn that one day we shall be where thou art, and *what* thou art.

Two or three further remarks are naturally suggested by these truths.

CHRISTIANITY *centres our hope and perfection, not in a system, but in a person.* In the schools of the world, systems are taught, not persons—Geometry, and not Euclid—botany, and not Linnæus—astronomy, and not Sir Isaac Newton. Christianity teaches a person, who comprehends all truths, and exhibits all virtue. Other men may put their trust in the laws which the facts of history and the phenomena of nature develop, but Christians repose upon an ever-living and ever-loving Redeemer. Systems, like mushrooms, now appear, and anon disappear; like the gliding waters they are in a state of perpetual transition; like the clouds over our head they rise and roll away. The great system-makers of our world have never given a helping-hand to their brethren in the great adversities of life. “All flesh is grass.” Do men trust in Judaism? Moses was grass. Do men trust in Mahometanism? Mahomet was grass. Do men trust in Calvinism? Calvin was grass. Do men trust in ecclesiastical organizations? All these are grass. They can give no succour in the hour of need. Christianity elevates man above nature, above laws, above systems, to Christ himself—to him as the end, as well as the author—the life, as well as the Lord of his History. Christ is with us now.

“O say not thou art left of God,  
Because his tokens in the sky  
Thou canst not read; this earth he trod;  
To teach thee he was ever nigh.

“He sees, beneath the fig tree green,  
Nathaniel con his sacred lore;  
Shouldst thou the closet seek unseen,  
He enters through the unopen’d door.

“And when thou liest, by slumber bound,  
Outwearied in the Christian fight,  
In glory, girt with saints around,  
He stands above thee through the night.



“When friends to Emmaus bend their course,  
 He joins, although he holds their eyes ;  
 Or, shouldst thou feel some fever’s force,  
 He takes thy hand—he bids thee rise.

“Or on a voyage, when calms prevail,  
 And prison thee upon the sea,  
 He walks the wave, he wings the sail—  
 The shore is gained, and thou art free.”

Again. *This portion of sacred scripture presents, incidentally man without Christ, in opposition to man in Christ.* The one runs antithetically to the other. Without Christ, man is condemned—condemned by conscience, by the holy beings of the universe, by God himself. He is enslaved by “the law of sin and death”—he is the dupe and the victim of sin—he “walks according to the flesh”—he “minds the flesh”—he is “dead”—he is “enmity against God.” He may walk and think and act ; he may have a commercial, literary, or an intellectual life, but life in Christ he has not. He has no risings of heart, through his mediation, to the Divine Father ; he has not His spirit. The unregenerate, however, was not the leading idea of Paul ; still he refers to him, that he might bring out the Christian life in its surpassing glory. Light abstractedly we cannot understand, but light in contrast to darkness is understood and loved by all, just as we may speak of the body to show the superiority of the mind, of vice to show the loveliness of virtue, or of the earth to show the superlative grandeur of heaven.

*These truths were not addressed to Roman believers, neither should they be addressed to English believers, without their being distinctly reminded of corresponding obligations.* “Brethren, we are debtors.” The Spirit of God condescends to lead us. We have received a filial spirit. We are conscious that God has the place of a father within us, and that he acts the part of a father towards us. “We are debtors.” Let us think of what he has done for us, and of what he is doing in us—and of what he has promised to do. Consciousness of unutterable obligations to Christ is no commercial or servile feeling ; it is

a noble and generous emotion ; it is a never-failing and never-ending spring of action. It has no bounds ; it cannot be measured by the standard of the world, nor of the church ; it shed its tears to wash the sacred feet of the Loved One, and wipes them with the hair of its head. The alabaster box of precious ointment is but a humble token of this grateful love : it converts duty into delight, and the reproaches of Christ into a halo of glory !

REV. J. DAVIES, ALBANY CHAPEL.

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Thirteenth.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,” &c.—1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

SUBJECT :—*Christ Resigning his Administration.*

THERE are two very different ideas attached to the word “kingdom” in this passage. One regards it as the empire of Satan, and the other as the empire of Christ. If the former be adopted, then the passage teaches that there will come a period when Christ, having subdued all the principalities and powers of this kingdom, will deliver the whole up to the everlasting Father, and when, to use the language of the Apocalypse, the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our God, and when he shall reign for ever. If the latter, then it means that when Christ, in the exercise of his mediatorial authority, has subjugated all the powers of moral evil, he will deliver up his commission to God, who will then be acknowledged as the absolute ruler of all. Either idea gives

the passage a grand and solemn meaning. The latter is the one commonly received, and which seems to us the most plausible.

The following are some of the truths which the passage regarded in this light suggests :—

I. That the government of our world is administered by Jesus Christ. In the 25th verse, he is spoken of as reigning, and in the 24th, as resigning his regal authority. The New Testament is full of the doctrine, that Christ reigns over our world—that all regal power is committed into his hands. This doctrine explains several otherwise inexplicable things in the history of man :—1. The perpetuation of the human race on this earth. Death was threatened on Adam the same day on which he should sin. He sinned and died not that day, but lived for centuries, and became the father of an immense and ever-multiplying family. And why? The biblical doctrine of mediation is the only principle that explains it. 2. The co-existence of sin and happiness in the same individual. Under the government of *absolute* righteousness, we should antecedently expect that, such an association would never exist, that wherever there was sin there would be misery proportioned to the sin. We are told there is perfect happiness in heaven, and we can understand it, because perfect holiness is there. We are told there is unmitigated misery in hell, and we can understand it, because there is unmixed depravity there; but here there is sin and happiness, comparative holiness, and great suffering. The mediative government is the only principle that explains this. 3. The offer of pardon, and the application of remedial influences to the condemned and corrupt. Under a righteous government, how is this to be explained? This is explicable only on the ground that He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sin.

II. That Christ administers the government of our world in order to put down all human evils. There are two classes of evil referred to :—1st. *Moral*. “All rule, all authority and power.” *Sinful principles* are the moral potentates of this

world—"the principalities and powers of darkness." Christ's government is to put them down, from *governments, churches, books, hearts, &c.* 2nd. *Physical.* "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death is the issue—the *totality* of all physical evils. Christ will destroy this. He will one day open the graves of the globe.

III. That when these evils are entirely put down, Christ will resign his administration into the hands of the everlasting Father. The time will come when *moral evil* shall be entirely exterminated from this earth, and when *death* shall be swallowed up in victory. Then comes the end. Christ having finished the work that was given him to do, resigns his office. The end realized, the means are no longer needed. Patriarchalism had its day; and we may regard Abraham as delivering up his ministration to Moses. Judaism had its day, fulfilled its mission, and we may regard Moses as delivering up his ministration to Christ. Mediation is having its day; and when it will have realized its design, Christ will deliver up his administration to the Father—the primal Fountain of all authority and power.

IV. That when Christ shall have resigned his administration, God "will be all in all" What does this mean? It does not mean the following thing:—1st, That there will be dissolution in the human and Divine in the constitution of Christ. There is no reason for expecting this, but many reasons might be urged against it. Nor, 2ndly, does it mean that Christ will lose any part of his influence in the Divine empire. From the laws of mental association, Christ will ever rise in the esteem and devotion of all who know his history, and especially of all who have been saved by his grace. Nor, 3rdly, does it mean that God will become something different to the universe in general than he has ever been. To the unfallen districts of his vast kingdom he has ever been "all in all." The apostle, it must be observed, is speaking of HUMANITY and what he means, I presume, is that God will become "all in all" to *it*—that he

will become to man, after this, very different to what he had ever been. Two facts will illustrate this :—

1. He will treat all men after this on the ground of their own moral merits. From the fall up to this period he had treated them, during their existence in this world, on the ground of Christ's mediation, and not on the ground of personal merit ; but now, the mediation removed, each man shall "reap the fruit of his own doings."

The righteous saved, the wicked damned,  
And God's eternal government approved.

2. All good men will, after this, subjectively realize the ABSOLUTE ONE as they had never done before. The atmosphere of their nature purified, He shall appear within them as the central orb, revealing everything in its light—uncovering the Infinite above and the finite beneath—making the finite manifest and glorious in the conscious light of the Infinite !

### Analysis of Homily the Fourteenth.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."—Heb. xi. 30.

LOOKING at the history of the destruction of Jericho, recorded in the sixth chapter of Joshua, we are reminded of the following facts :—First. *That it is the prerogative of God to do whatsoever he pleases, and by whatsoever agency he chooses.* He commanded the Jews now to destroy this city, level its walls, and massacre its population. This he had a right to—(1.) because they were his creatures. He who gives life has a right to take it away. (2.) Because they were rebels against his righteous government, and therefore they deserved this awful doom. But he has a right to do not only whatsoever he pleases, but *by whatsoever agency he deems proper.* The Jews were the agents he employed to work this fearful

destruction upon this city. He might have employed famine, pestilence, earthquake, storm, lightning, &c., but men he chose. *The second fact, of which we are reminded by the narrative is, that it is man's solemn duty to do whatsoever God commands.* Had the greatest human sovereign on earth commanded his subjects to do unto any people what the Jews were now commanded to do unto Jericho, instead of it being an obligation for them to do so, they would perpetrate a crime by the attempt, simply because no human sovereign has a right to issue such orders. The case is different in relation to God: he *having* the right to command, it is man's duty to obey. *The third fact suggested by the history is, that faith in God is indispensable to the fulfilment of God's command.* Now, we are told by Paul that it was faith that did this; and this leads us to the

SUBJECT:—*The Faith of Man, and the Energy of God.*

I. *The Faith of Man.* What was the faith which induced them to obey God in this instance? 1. It was not faith in their benevolent sympathies. The benevolent sympathies would oppose the Jew in this command. 2. It was not faith in moral intuitions. Conscience, we think, would oppose the work—would suggest to them, what right have we to deprive these men of their homes, property, and lives? 3. It was not faith in their notions of adaptations. Neither their native sagacity nor past experience would suggest to them that mere breathing through rams' horns would level those massive structures. We can imagine the natives bending over their lofty battlements, and ridiculing those Jews as they walked round their city, day after day, blowing through these rams' horns. 4. It was not faith merely in the *Divinity* of the command. A mere belief that a command, clashing with all the notions of *benevolence, rectitude, and adaptation*, was Divine, would never be sufficient to induce obedience. There must be something behind that, namely, faith in GOD—in his *wisdom, righteousness, and power.* There is a vast difference between the believing in the divinity of a communication, and the be-



lieving in the character and principles of the Divinity. This latter is the highest *faith of man*—the faith necessary to obedience. This Abraham and all the patriarchs had, &c.

II. *The Energy of God.* “The walls of Jericho fell down.” Although there was manifestly miracle in this, the incident is nevertheless suggestive of truths of universal application. It teaches, first, that whatever God commands, however it might seem to clash with our *notions* or *intuitions*, we should attempt. These Jews did so, and Jehovah blessed them. As a rule, the commands of God chime in with all that is rational or instinctive in human nature; nor do I know of a single precept, now binding, that meets not with an echo in the human heart; still a discrepancy is supposable, has been, was now, and may be again; and the principle, therefore, should ever be recognised. Secondly, it teaches that whatever Divine command we attempt to carry out, with *faith in Him*, we shall accomplish. What was now the cause of success, what levelled to the dust those massive walls? Not certainly the instrumentality employed; it was the *power* of God. This is ever the case, as really, though not as obviously, when the means are adapted, as when there appears no fitness in the agency whatever. We are “dust and ashes”: whatever we accomplish, we accomplish as the *organs* of a Divine energy. Thirdly, it teaches that whatever we accomplish it will be through his energy, as the reward of our *faith in him*. These Jews obtained this power through their faith. Faith in the historic truth of Christianity, and in its adaptation to meet the moral condition of humanity, is one thing, but faith in the everlasting Father is another. The former, though important, is no guarantee of success. An implicit reliance, a filial confidence, and a boundless trust in “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” is essential to secure a Divine energy in our undertakings that shall remove mountains, level to the dust the mightiest fortresses of evil, obtain a victory over the world, and give the fiat of Omnipotence to our faltering voice.

### Analysis of Homily the Fifteenth.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

### SUBJECT:—*Death in Idea.*

THERE are two aspects in which this language might be regarded. First. As the expression of a sentiment that will be felt by the redeemed after the resurrection. The writer had, in the reasoning of the preceding verse, winged the intermediate ages, and reached the period when the graves of this dying earth should yield up their dead, and each man of each generation should stand forth in all the completeness of a body organized for the activities of eternity. Literally, then, death would lose its sting, and the grave its victory. It might, therefore be that, in the anticipation of this period, our apostle now struck the key-note of that triumphal hymn which would burst in full and swelling music from the overwhelming multitudes of the sainted and the raised. Or, secondly, this language might be viewed as the expression of an exultant sentiment which the apostle felt even now, and which may be enjoyed by all the true disciples of Christianity. As a fact, we know Paul had this sentiment. His faith had long since disrobed death of its terrific garb. He looked at it now with a bright eye and jubilant heart—he "desired to depart." Thousands of the good in Christ have felt the same. They have fronted, with undaunted hearts, the last enemy, welcomed the fatal stroke, and oftentimes made the dark valley ring with the shouts of victory!

Now, it is the triumphant sentiment in its latter aspect—namely, as existing in the minds of the good *here*, on this the dark side of the grave—that we adopt for our present meditation. As yet, the apostle had not *literally* won the battle; the conflict had not come. He was still on the dark side of the grave; he had not crossed the stream, and

entered the shores of the everliving. Death to him was, as yet, an *idea*, and the idea was exultant and joyous. It is a fact as worthy of our notice as it is clear in evidence, that death affects us while living only in *idea*. Had we not the capacity of forming judgments about our dissolution, it would be absolutely nothing to us until we should actually feel its paralyzing touch. It would not influence us in prospect. Like the beast or bird, we should not feel it until it came, and then on the green turf we should lie down, and breathe out our last, without one solitary regret, or one foreboding thought. But these ever busy and creating souls of ours clothe the event in new and awful attributes, and make it a thing far more stupendous in prospect than in reality. It will be to us a friend or foe—*victim* or *victor*—according to our mental conception. If our ideas be gloomy, it will cloud the sunshine of life, and fill us with terror in the last hour; but if bright, we shall spend our days in cheerful usefulness, and view the grave as a lumined pathway to an immortal future. The passage before us suggests the POPULAR and the CHRISTIAN idea of death—what death seems to the “natural man,” and what it seems to the spiritual. Let us notice—

I. THE POPULAR IDEA. The language implies that the bulk of the race viewed not death as the writer did; that the idea to them had a *sting*, a *victory*, and a *connexion with felt guilt*.

*The popular idea has a “sting.”* “O death, where is thy sting?”—“Whilst the idea of dying stings the world, it does not me.” The allusion is here to some venomous serpent, having not merely mortality, but *agony*, in his sting. The world sedulously shuts up its heart against the idea, but there is not an individual into whose bosom it does not force its way at times, and, like a serpent, it ever *stings*. What a train of painful suggestions and horrific forebodings does it bring after it. It evokes thoughts about the dissolution of endeared associations, the mysterious agonies of the last hour, and the peradventures of the issue, that dart a rankling

anguish into every pore. There is no idea that stings an ungodly man like the idea of death.

*The popular idea has a "victory."* It not only stings like a serpent, but crushes like a conqueror. I speak not of the victory which death obtains over the body,—this is universal, irrespective alike of our character or ideas,—but I speak of a more real and crushing "victory" than this—a victory over the soul—the *man*. Some are all their lifetime subject to bondage through this idea. The boldest worldling cowers and turns pale before it. The warrior's apparent indifference in the fatal battle is no exception. In the mad excitement of the hour he loses the idea; it is swamped, for the moment, in the tidal flow of furious passion. Our position is, that whenever the idea takes possession of a worldly mind, it is a VICTOR: the soul is prostrated, the man is unmanned. Hence, on death-beds, princely fortunes have been offered for a short postponement of the dread event. Johnson, a man of broad philosophy and herculean intellect, was the slave and the victim of this idea. His giant nature reeled, and fell before it. Though old age had stolen from him much that makes life precious, albeit, on his expiring bed, he said that he would suffer the amputation of a limb could he but adjourn, for one short year, the dying day.

*The popular idea has a felt connexion with sin.* "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The sinner's sense of guilt will be according to his *knowledge* of law, and the terror of death will be according to his sense of guilt. The apostle means one of two things by this: either that sin is the cause of death, or the cause of the poignancy associated with the idea. Both facts, we presume, are equally true, but the latter seems the particular meaning, and is most to our present purpose. It is *felt guilt* that gives a "sting" and "victory" to the idea of dying. On the assumption that we should have died had we not sinned, would there have been pain associated with the idea? Would the death-day look so dark and terrible before us as now? beclouding every

step in the path of life? We trow not. Under such circumstances, we should have hailed the event as a sublime change in the onward and upward march of being. All that is horrific in the idea starts from a sin-stricken conscience.

Such, then, is the popular idea of death. Wherever, either in heathen or Christian lands, in ancient or modern times, Christianity is not received in its moral significance and spirit, you find it. The literature handed to us from classic Greece and imperial Rome—the expression of minds, distinguished not more by towering genius and abstract intellect, than by an all-daring courage, is pervaded with the most gloomy associations about death. The idea, wherever it found its way into the mind, had manifestly both a “sting” and a “victory :” no language was strong enough to represent their horror of the last hour. “More,” says a modern writer, “than thirty epithets did they apply to death, all indicative of the deepest dejection and dread.” They spoke of death as the gloomy day, as the iron sleep, as the eternal night; as cruel, merciless, and inexorable. All this is but a sample of the general mind of the world upon the subject. Men’s affrighted imaginations have wrought the event into the most hideous personifications. Hence, it is sometimes a cruel hunter laying snares for men; sometimes an horrific angel, with the cup of poison in his hand; sometimes a gaunt and ghastly skeleton; sometimes a mower, with his scythe, cutting down every blade in the field of humanity; and sometimes a king of terrors treading empires in the dust. Thus sad and gloomy is the idea of death to the world, making its grave “a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.”

II. THE CHRISTIAN IDEA. And, first, we observe that the idea *has neither sting nor victory*. “Where is thy sting?” “Where is thy victory?” By implication, they once existed, but are gone. Secondly, the Christian idea has, instead of sting and victory, *rapture and triumph*. Thanks be unto God, which “giveth us the victory.” The victor has become

the victim—the anguish of the sting has given place to the ecstasy of the song. And, thirdly, the Christian idea *comes to man through one medium*. The old terrific and popular idea of death has given way to this bright and glorious one, and how? not through the philosophies or the religions of the world, but, says Paul, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” How does Christ give this idea? The common answer is, by taking away the sense of guilt, and bringing “life and immortality to light.” This sounds very scriptural, and will satisfy those who have never felt the intellectual pressure of the question, but is, in reality, no reply. In general, one sentence will furnish the solution,—namely, by awakening in the soul A NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE. No intellectual conviction could ever *plant* this glorious idea in a soul “dead in trespasses and sin.” You may preach to a man the sublime doctrines of immortality, as revealed by Jesus, with the logic of a Paul, or the eloquence of an Apollos, so as to commend them irresistibly to his convictions, but, if his spiritual nature remain dead, you will not permanently dislodge the old and gloomy idea of death. But how does a new spiritual life do this? Because it involves the following things:—First. *A stronger sympathy with the Arbiter of our destiny than with any other being*—a sympathy whose language is, “Whom have I in heaven but thee?”—a moral oneness with that God in “whose hands our breath is, and before whom are all our ways.” Where this is not there can never be anything but gloom in death: a dread of God must give a dread of death. Secondly. *A stronger sympathy with the spiritual than the material*. Much of the fearfulness of death springs from the idea of separation from the dear objects of our attachment. Wherever, therefore, the supreme attachments are on the material, the idea of death, however glorious the revelation of the future, must ever be distressing, on account of the *separations* it involves; but where the most sympathy is with the “unseen and eternal,” death, will be regarded not as severing connexions, but as uniting them in closer and dearer fellowship, and will, therefore, be joyously welcomed as a visitant of love. Thirdly. *A stronger sympathy with the*



*future world than the present.* Where there is a stronger sympathy with the present world than the future, the idea of severance must ever be painful ; but where it is otherwise, the event will be hailed. It must then, we think, be obvious that where the presiding sympathies of the soul are thus with the *Divine spiritual and future*, the idea of death will be bright and jubilant ; but where they are not, whatever the *theology*, it must be dark and depressing. This threefold sympathy, then, we hold essential, in the nature of things, to the existence of this felicitous and triumphant idea of death ; and this is *spiritual life*—the life that Jesus lived—the life whose law makes men free from the law of sin and death.

Now, this spiritual life comes to man through Christ. To give it was the object of his mission. “I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.” What, indeed, could give a controlling sympathy with the Eternal but Christ’s revelations of his infinite love ? What could remove guilt from the conscience, but faith in his sacrifice ? What could awaken a generous sympathy with the spiritual and the future, but his disclosures of the “many mansions” in his Father’s house, and the heaven of perfection and bliss that awaits the demise of the good ? His doctrines, works, example, death, spirit, all are to quicken the spirit in this new life.

The subject, thus considered with a condenseness, which, we fear, will unfit it for popular impression, supplies, first, an argument for the value of Christianity. The world’s idea of death is a miserable one : whatever mind it possesses, it pangs and paralyzes. It is opposed to the full development of the soul, and the pleasures and duties of life. Christianity alone can destroy this idea, and help man to meet his fate with a halcyon soul. Secondly, it supplies a criterion of character. What is your idea of death ? How does the prospect of the mortal hour affect you ? Does it disturb you with fear, or inspire you with hope ? Does your spirit cower into weakness, or spring into power, in its presence ? Are you its VICTIM or its VICTOR ? I take this to be a testing question. Fear of death is

heathenism, not Christianity—starts from conscious sin, not from conscious holiness. SPIRITUAL LIFE expels all dark ideas of death, as the new life of May throws off the sere and withered foliage of the departed year. It is a light which has its eclipses and shadowy clouds; but these, as in nature, are momentary exceptions. A bright and genial sky, irradiating even the valley of death, and tinging it with beauties is its law. Physically, we must soon fall the lifeless victims of death; but, spiritually, we need not be crushed by the idea while living. No; thank God, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, we might spiritually conquer this physical conqueror, and sing—

Thy stroke, O death,—terror of the world,—I hail;  
 'Twill snap the fetters of my captive soul,  
 And set me free—free to wing the vasty realms of being,  
 Inbreathe the freest air of life divine,  
 And bask me in the sunshine of eternal love.

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#### Analysis of Homily the Sixteenth.

“Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” &c.—Ephes. iv. 9, 10.

SUBJECT:—*The Ascending and Descending of Christ.*

I. That his life was marked by changes the most unparalleled. He descended from the highest *circumstances* to the lowest, and ascended from the lowest to the highest again.

II. That, amidst all these changes, he preserved his identity “the same”:—1, The same in being; 2, the same in sympathy; 3, the same in purpose.

III. That the grand end of these changes was the spreading of the highest influence through the universe. “That he might fill all things.” It does not mean with his presence, but with his moral influence—to impregnate humanity with his quickening and all-transforming truths—“fill all” *institutions, books, intellects, hearts*, with this system and spirit.

# The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 80.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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III. ANOTHER class, represented in this chapter, are those who are fearfully alarmed at the truth. HEROD typifies this class. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." It was, says Neander, that Herod whose crimes were committed in violation of every natural feeling; which ever urged him on to new deeds of cruelty; whose path to the throne, and whose throne itself, were stained with human blood; whose vengeance against conspirators, not satiated with their own destruction, demanded that of their whole families; whose rage was hot, up to the very hour of his death, against his nearest kindred; whose wife, Marianne, and three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater, fell victims to his suspicion, the last just before his own death;—who, in a word, certainly deserved that the Emperor Augustus should have said of him,—"*Herodis mallet porcus esse, quam filius.*" On the page of human wickedness, few have figured in darker hues and in greater prominence than this Herod. Vice had extracted all virtuous sentiments from his breast: he was a champion in sin, and a tyrant to the inmost core; but he was, nevertheless, a coward. There are four things very remarkable here:—1st. A king in trouble. Popular sentiment ever associates happiness with the idea of a king. 2nd. A king in trouble about the birth of a

babe. How strange that, before the idea of Bethlehem's Babe, the heart of this man, whose name struck terror into the people of Judea, should quail with alarm. 3rd. A king in trouble about that in which the good rejoiced. All the pious were in ecstasies, and angels carolled the event in rapturous music through the skies. 4th. A king in trouble about that designed to bless him and the world. Surely trouble about such circumstances argues something miserably wrong in the man's soul. Now, we shall take this man as a type of an everliving class of men—the *truth-fearers*. In circles—political, mercantile, and religious—there are men ever “troubled” at the birth of a popular truth. There is a suggestive analogy between Herod's fear and the fear of such men. First. *Herod dreaded the event of Christ's birth, because of its supposed opposition to him.* He had no faith in the rectitude of his position, and, therefore, no settled confidence in his security. He knew that his throne was reared on falsehood, injustice, and bloodshed. Everywhere amongst his subjects he discovered high political hopes associated with this event. The wondrous star seen by the wise men, the marvellous tale of the shepherds, the mysterious excitement that pervaded all classes, and the extraordinary reports which we may suppose such excitement would set in wide and rapid circulation, would tend also to touch his conscience into a sense of guilt, and thus heighten his ideas of danger. Conscientious guilt unmans our nature, and converts the bravest into cowards. It was the imaginary bearing of the event upon Herod, in overthrowing his throne and crushing his power, that terrified him. Had he discovered in it no antagonistic aspect to himself, he would not have feared. Thus it is ever with the *truth-fearers*. It is because the truth is seen to bear against their selfish interest that they dread it. Announce the doctrine of *human rights* amongst political classes whose pomp and power are derived and sustained by its violation; proclaim the doctrine of *spiritual equality* to the robed, titled, and plethoric ecclesiastics, who owe their all to the lordship they exercise over God's heritage; preach the doctrine of *universal peace*

amidst those who owe their heraldry and their bread to the bayonet and the sword; and in all such cases you may expect to see your audience "troubled," as Herod was at the birth of Christ. All history is prolific with examples. The birth of a new truth has ever terrified the men who have discovered in it an opposition to their principles and position. Secondly. *Herod's dread stimulated him to the most reprehensible conduct.* To avoid the restriction of his gloomy apprehensions, he purposed on the destruction of Jesus. The men who dread truth have ever acted in a similar way. They have sought to put down the press, seal the tongue, and paralyze free thought. But mark Herod's conduct in this attempt. 1st. It was *deceptive*. "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Here he plays the hypocrite with consummate art. He moves in the dark, "privily" consults the magi, puts on the mask of devotion, and intimates a reverence for him he sought to murder. Men who dread truth have ever sought to put it down by cunning and deception: they conceal their hate under the profession of love;—like Judas, they kiss to betray. 2nd. His conduct was *cruel*. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." You have abundant counterparts to this in the history of persecution, from the days of Stephen to this hour. Finally, his conduct was *futile*. An angel appeared "in a dream," both to the wise men and to Mary and Joseph, and frustrated the monarch's impious aim. Herod fulfilled his iniquitous course—died, and left a name of infamy for the execration of mankind; but the Babe he sought to murder, under the fostering care of Providence, grew to manhood, leavened his age with his regenerative doctrine, and bequeathed to humanity a system and an influence that to-day secure for him the "many crowns" of the world

“the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” Thus it must ever be with the TRUTH. Men may seek to crush it as it is born into their domains, but there is a God watching over its cradle ;—there is a quenchless immortality in its infant struggles. My reader, there may be a truth rising in thy circle antagonistic to thy prejudices, position, and influence, and it may trouble thee. If thou wouldst get true peace, strip thyself forthwith of everything opposed to it, take it into thy heart, and mould thy character after its holy spirit ; but seek not to crush it, for the effort must prove futile—yes *futile*. Thou mightst as well try to dry up the Atlantic, or quench the everlasting stars, as to destroy a truth. Surrender to it, and it will save thee—battle with it, and it will be thy infamy and ruin.

IV. The others represented in this chapter are those who are the affectionate guardians of the truth. Joseph and Mary are the types of this class—a class who have ever been the brightest ornaments and the greatest benefactors of the race. This class is here represented in two of its primary features. 1. The parents sought the protection of Jesus from impulses of genuine affection : He was dear to them parentally and religiously ; their hearts were on him both as their offspring and Messiah. This urged them to bear him on their bosom down to Egypt, and back from Egypt to Nazareth. Christianity has ever had *professed* guardians of truth. But those who, like Joseph and Mary, have been stimulated by pure affection, are the only true ones. Many—the majority, alas !—have manifested more affection for the honors and immunities of the office than for the truth. 2. In seeking the protection of Jesus, they followed a Divine direction : they moved as the “angel of the Lord” had counselled them. All the true guardians of truth ever act thus. They contend for it in God’s way. *Fraud, uncharitableness, oppression, dogmatism, persecution, violence*, have too often been developed under the profession of guarding truth ; but these are in opposition to the direction of God, and flagrant sins are they against *man, truth, and Heaven*.



# A HOMILY

ON

## The Incarnation.

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“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”—Luke i. 35.

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UNDER all that is peculiar and original in Christianity lies the transcendent fact of the Incarnation. “God manifest in the flesh” is the all in all of the Christian revelation. The Redeemer beheld, on one side of his nature, as Son of man, must be beheld, on the other, as Son of God, or a perplexing anomaly will be the result of our study of his character. That he was born of woman was not more certainly a condition of his earthly existence, than that he should be miraculously formed, know no paternal relation, and be able to say, in a sense altogether unique and peculiar, that God was his Father—that he was the Son of God. That an infinite wonder should invest this marvellous fact is admitted: but if we would exclude wonders from our contemplation, we must reject the Bible; indeed, we must needs go out of the world. But, without any further preliminary, let me show you that there are certain presumptions in favor of the Incarnation of peculiar force; secondly, that the attentive study of our Lord’s life renders it necessary; while, thirdly, the rejection of the doctrine and the hypothesis that our Saviour was born of earthly parents, is attended with greater, far greater, difficulties than the doctrine for which it is substituted.

There is a presumption, then, on which I expend but a sentence or two, arising out of the fact, that the earliest legendary histories of almost all nations give us heroic individuals, illustrious defenders or saviours of their country,

who had but one earthly parent. Scarcely does a distinguished colonist, or founder of a legislation, come before us, in the recital of ancient story, but his father is celebrated as a god. Not a royal family, hardly an aristocratic lineage, existed, which did not boast a fabulous ancestry, reaching back immemorially, till it terminated in a deity. We do not seek, recollect, for evidence of a truth in the deceptive light of fables, but, as a presumption, we are warranted to ask, what could have been the origin of these prevalent fables? If we find, in the ceremonials of almost every nation of antiquity, those grotesque combinations of animals, which lead us back to the cherubim at the gate of Eden; if the introduction of a serpent and a tree suggest the fall—the outline, for example, on an Assyrian excavation, recently discovered, resembling almost exactly a picture of the temptation of Eve in our old Bibles; if deluges in many lands, and a recommencement of our race from a new stock, in many fables, lead back our minds to the true account; if we cannot account for any self-originating movement in the human mind which would account for these narratives or fables;—why may we not also say that the early prophecy of a Deliverer, who should be born of a woman, but whose Father should be God alone, must have taken such hold on the mind, must have become so treasured a tradition, that, like all other primitive traditions, it should have been greatly perverted and abused?—yet not more so than the tradition of *sacrifices* or of *oracles*. Assuredly, the universality of a divine parentage among the Greeks and Egyptians, and of incarnations among the Hindoos, points to some fountain of primeval truth; as the lion, the eagle, and the man, deified in a hundred different ways and symbols, clearly indicate the cherubical figures which surrounded the throne of Jehovah.

But, without dwelling any longer on this circumstance, let me add another, much more open to all observers—viz., that the life affords a presumption of something altogether peculiar and divine in the birth. Grant for a moment that God was his Father, and the whole life will bear you out in

that strange concession. It is such a life as any one would suppose—might presume—would characterize One who was born of the Holy Ghost. I refer, of course, to the faultless model of divine life which his daily conduct presented. It is this which is unique and peculiar. Whence hath this man this wonderful life? I do not say that the absolutely faultless life of Christ would originate in any human observer the idea of a Divine Being taking hold of our nature, but I do say, that when that divine susception of our nature is revealed—expressly declared—a presumption for the truth of the revelation—a presumption assuredly cogent enough to preclude our rejecting the doctrine without further examination—a presumption for the truth of the birth—the divinity of the birth lies in the divinity of the life; so that it is quite a sufficient reply to one who asks, “Can you explain, can you understand, being born of the Holy Ghost?” to answer, “Can you explain the living, the high and sinless living, of this holy One?” If there never was such a birth before, there never was such a life before; there never was such a temper, spirit, before; there never was such a speech before; never such a death before; life and death equally without sin. The origination of such a life may have been unique, without any great extravagance of representation.

2. The question is, whether there may not be such a living character as will form not only a presumption, but a demand, for such a birth? The union of the divine with the human in Jesus Christ is not a matter of speculation, but a fact of history. If it cannot be proved to be historical truth, I think the sooner we give it up the better. I can make nothing of a metaphysical God: it is only in its historical revelation to our race that the divine becomes ascertainable by us. And when I speak of the divine in Christ Jesus, I do not refer to the exercise of a miraculous power over nature, because other than divine beings have been commissioned to work miracles, although you will notice that what they do as instruments, he does as a principal; but I refer to the living union of a divine with a human nature in Christ as evidencing itself in the

greatest revolution the world ever saw—a revolution of thought, of worship, of opinion—emanating entirely and exclusively from the person of Jesus Christ. That Europe owes to him the absence of idolatry and of degrading slavery, of polytheism, and of its attendant cruelties, is as historically true, as that, however slow the progress of human society has been in an upward direction, since the circulation of his religion, in laws, in customs, in social habits. One has but to contrast the stationariness and monotony of Mohammedan countries with the bustle and progress and freedom of inquiry visible in Christian lands, to be convinced that the stimulating and leavening influence of European civilization, even when unacknowledged by us, lies in the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ. All this, I repeat, is strictly historical. The purer the form of Christianity a people shall receive, the more unequivocal, we shall see, is its progress, its elevation, its freedom. Moreover, the peculiar truths which have effected this revolution, which has been slowly, yet surely, operating for eighteen centuries, will augment the force of the argument. The universal Christian priesthood, the individual responsibility of every one to his God only, the worth of the soul, the summing up of all religion into one word—love; all these truths do as certainly underlie the great changes and improvements of the modern world, as their absence will account for the universal corruption and downward tendencies of the ancient world. I say, then, that that in Christianity which is divine is matter of history. Love without limit, making safe inquiry without limit; love to every creature on the highest grounds; making all creatures one in the sight of God; we cannot have a higher idea of essential Deity than this—unlimited love and knowledge. These, then, were the expressions of Christ's life—love—light, without let, or restriction, or end. The highest type of Christian society we can imagine is that which is reaching after this standard. We may say that every great struggle of the mind, from the apostolic times to the Reformation, from the Reformation downwards, has been an effort in that direction, not east

away. All philanthropy sighs after it; all men seek it; all Christians pray for it; all conversions are first steps to it. The love that knows no limit, the inquiry after truth which acknowledges no responsibility on earth, are features in European society which a thoughtful student can trace back, century after century, till he beholds their resplendent original in the face of Jesus Christ. In one place you see them disfigured by passion, like a family likeness of great beauty debased by intemperance; in another you see the brand of authority subduing the native features into a stiff and formal precision; still the steady progress of European civilization is but an effort to rise to the divine standard of Christ's life. The leaven leavens the whole lump; and the most advanced specimens and models of human advancement and inquiry are only those who have caught the living Spirit of Christ, and are therefore fitted to guide the rest. Here, then, is a strict historical argument. The upward course of the human race has originated in those very things which proved the divinity of Christ—his love—his light—which were the divine expressions of his life. That a divine nature, therefore, lived in union with a human nature is ascertained; but when that divine nature took hold of the human, is clearly matter of pure revelation. The *fact* of the union is the great thing; the time of its organization is surely only determinable by him who established that union. In the book which ascertains to us this union, the origin of it is fixed on the Holy Ghost overshadowing the mother of Jesus, "the result of a direct creative act of God, and not of the ordinary laws of human generation." And we repeat that the life of Christ, and the moral revolution produced by his life, not only presume such an origin, but demand it and confirm it.

3. Taking up now an entirely different argument, I will endeavour to show that there are aspects and characteristics of the work of Christ which demand such a fundamental fact as that of the Incarnation to rest upon.

The doctrine of sacrifice runs through both Testaments: in the former, as typical and figurative; in the latter, as com-

pleted and fulfilled. All Old Testament sacrifices look forward to a greater one, which was required to give them a meaning, and to bring them to a close. Their great object was to bring sins to remembrance, as the object of the final sacrifice was to take them away. The indispensable characteristic of the sacrifice was its perfection—its freedom from blemish, or taint, or spot,—a characteristic of twofold purpose, for it taught the worshipper to give God his best in all things pertaining to property, family, or mind, and it disciplined the thoughts, by a preparatory and elementary kind of instruction, for the reception of that faultless sacrifice whose sinless moral perfection was signified and foreshadowed by the spotless lambs and immaculate sheep. That he who was to come was to realize in his person the sacrificial fulness of meaning of which bulls and goats were the first outlines, is clear, from a multitude of passages in the scriptures; but there is an utter deficiency in the antitype, unless a moral purity and perfection, answering to the stainless physical cleanness of the type—a spiritual beauty fulfilling the prophecy of ceremonial comeliness—unless a Lamb of God, “*holy*, harmless, undefiled,” present itself, to finish and to harmonize four thousand years of hints and notices and shadows, and “make an end of sacrifices,” by an oblation of sumless value, the solution, and, at the same time, the origin of sacrifices; for they were designed to lead to him, and he came to fulfil them. He was their Alpha and Omega—their beginning and end.

Without going at present into the meaning of atonement and substitution, it will be sufficient to regard sacrifices now as the essential element in acceptable approach to God. This we know, that in drawing nigh to him, it was indispensable that a spotless victim should be offered, that sins should be confessed over its head. It is enough to say, that this was the divine method, for four thousand years, of deepening men’s sense of sin, and of their need of forgiveness, and of cleanness of heart; and it is quite impossible for any student of the Epistles to miss the great truth, that in our approaches to God, the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, is presented



as forming that one thing needful for us, which the animal offerings formed in ancient times. But we can go beyond mere analogies, and search for a reason deeper than types, in that sense of need which all must feel to avail themselves of—a *power* which, while it has human sympathies, is not touched with human sins. It is not more deeply felt that a fellow-sufferer can alone feel for us, than it is felt that the suspicion of falsehood, of moral wavering, of deceit, of cupidity, of any other evil, would strike a dead palsy into our confidence. These are the very sins we want to have removed from ourselves; but he who would remove them must not be chargeable with them. I do not go to a blind man to be healed of blindness, to an undecided person to be taught firmness of purpose; and yet we want one who can feel for these evils, can understand these evils, but who has never yielded to them, though he has suffered from them.

Now, it is matter of history that one Being only had human sympathies without human sinfulness; only one was ever able to ask, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” only One was able to invite, “Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly;” the perfection of his character constituting a ground of confidence, and the sympathy of his character forming an everlasting invitation to trust: and this has been the large experience of eighteen centuries, recollect. The weak, the timid, the wavering, as well as the profligate, the hardened, the sensualist, on their repentance, have met with but one object to allure, or to subdue, or to strengthen. Sinless sympathy! Righteous love—the fellow-feeling of human nature and the purity of the divine! The first beckoning the transgressor to return, the second melting his hardness, while it strengthens his weakness: for what abashes a sinful habit, what makes us abandon it so much, as kindly fellowship with one who is above it?

Now, look carefully at the course of this argument. Four thousand years of sacrificial preparation, figured in spotless animals—a coming spotless character; at length he appeared, lived, taught, and died,—the only spotless Being, confessedly,

ever born of woman. Think that his sinlessness or his righteousness should have so entered, as a higher life, into the life of all who believe, as to have formed, for eighteen centuries, their single trust before God, and then tell me whether we are not called upon to believe that a divine origin belongs to his human generation? Who shall declare his generation, from whom such infinite blessings have flowed? It seems demanded of this Head of a new race, that, like the first Adam, there should be a peculiar divine relation to him. Whatever is mere human nature, whatever its abilities, must be marked with the faults and evils of human nature; but when *One* comes forth into public life, and is *without sin*, and is therefore a *ground of confidence to sinners*, I think we are loudly called upon to hearken to intimations of a mysterious and transcendent descent. We are prepared for such intimations; and when we read, not that God formed him of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, but that, by as great a miracle, and in fulfilment of a promise made to the mother of our race, he sent forth, by a direct creative act, his Son, born of a woman—when we read this overshadowing of Mary by the power of the Highest, we recognise at once a fitness of the end to the beginning. The great ages before his birth, and after it, seem like the wise men of the East to open their treasures, and present to him their gifts. The gold and the frankincense of countless altars, derive their worth and sweetness from his greater worth and beauty. Very fitly do angels break the silence of night to glorify such a birth; nor can we wonder that a star should guide the sages to worship a child, foretold for four thousand years, and destined to make tens of thousands of years bear the impress of his mighty mind!

But whatever difficulties some may suppose there are in the way of this doctrine, I will show that there is a greater difficulty in rejecting it. To account for his model life is an insurmountable difficulty. To avoid a miracle, you must admit a great absurdity. First. Here is a sinless moral person, but produced according to ordinary laws. But this

perfect Teacher calls himself Son of God ; alone, of all men, assumes the divine prerogative to forgive sins ; declares he came down from heaven to forgive sins ; that he is in the Father and the Father in him. Now, then, supposing him to be an ordinary man, how is he sinless ? where is his meekness ? But we are compelled to admit his moral excellency, take whatever view of him we will. Assume, then, that he is but a man, and you have moral excellence and perfection in union with usurpation and falsehood ! In short, you are obliged to admit, as the very basis of religion, a flat contradiction—a revolting absurdity ; for surely the meekness and lowliness of a perfect teacher would direct attention from himself to God—would disclaim prayer and worship, and the attribution of divine titles ; but this model Man sanctions and demands all these things, a proceeding perfectly in keeping with a divine original, but anomalous and monstrous, in the highest degree, on the denial of it.

Again. Is it credible that the disciples should have been capable of forming perceptions of such a peerless standard of excellence ? that imperfect beings, thirsting for a temporal Messiah, should have been able to draw the likeness of one so entirely alien to their tastes and patriotic anticipations ? that they should have been capable of describing a character, which was not only in advance of their age, but of ours ? and that they should have fabricated and invented an ideal character utterly irreconcilable to all such fabrications and inventions ? Ingenious liars devise the only truthful life the world has ever seen ! They expend their powers on a self-destructive process ; they combine features of surpassing beauty which only set off their own deformity ; they convict themselves in proportion to their success. In the first place, then, we say they are not capable of forming such an original : but, supposing they were able, the purity and holiness of the original would have been fatal to their schemes, while the most monstrous absurdity remains, viz., that Jews—the hereditary foes of idols, the jealous guardians of the

doctrine of the invisible spiritual Godhead—should deliberately deify a man, displace all idols to make room for theirs, is an utter incredibility, which the man who could admit ought never to laugh at the capacious, easy faith, or, as he may call it, all-devouring credulity, of the believer in the immaculate conception.

But, finally, it cannot be that we have been deceived. All believers, martyrs, penitents, dying sinners, all leaning on a splendid falsehood!—an historical fable! It cannot be! Yet it is so if we deny this doctrine; for, undoubtedly, the first hopeful thought of every returning sinner, from the apostles' day to ours, has been the sovereign truth, of One able to save to the uttermost; of One occupying the seat of universal dominion—the throne of grace—where every whisper is audible, every pang sensible, to Him who was compassed with our infirmities; who prayed through the long night, and whose soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Oh, delusion! All this time you have been trusting in a man—a good, but fallible and limited man. He never heard your prayers, never caught your sighs, never healed your wounds, never stanchd your tears. Oh, no; you have been dishonoring God all this time, by offering praises, due to him only, to one of his creatures; and all this delusion has been practised for eighteen centuries, by thousands of the wisest, purest, best, and greatest of men! Out of it has risen the true grandeur of the nations, the enlightenment of mind, the pillar of cloud and of fire to the advancing world. On this stubble the earth's base has been built. From Stephen, who cried, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” downwards through the glorious army of martyrs, to the last, who cried, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly”—and has hardly yet, or now that I am speaking, passed behind the veil—all have been deceived if he is not Divine, and deceived by the only faultless character whom God ever raised up for his people's good;—why, it is monstrous. It is a difficulty ten thousand times more perplexing than any other mystery which obscures the

divine administration. This would blacken it, and envelop the throne of the Eternal with distrusts and suspicions and mockeries of hope, which no prayer could penetrate, and no faith could scatter.

But when we open our hearts freely to the influences of divine things, and suffer our thoughts to take the impressions which the deep things of God are able to create, how can we help feeling that a Divine Being stands before us in the person of Jesus Christ? We are unable to resist the conviction of divinity: the veil of sophistry is needed to hide the evidence from us. So much meekness in union with so much majesty—such goodness, and such severity—such deep acquaintance with human evils, with such absolute exemption from them—combine to shut up the susceptible mind to the faith of Thomas, and to the worship of Thomas. “My Lord and my God.” When sin appears exceeding sinful, and the voice of redeeming love proclaims its pardon, a going forth of the heart to meet one greater than our hearts, is known and felt; and as the gold leaf in the electrometer flutters at the passing by of the thunder-cloud, as if conscious of the neighbourhood of a kindred element, so a soul, awakened by the touch of heavenly power, is sympathetic of divinity, and rises up quickly, like Mary, when the Master cometh.

To a heart at all sensitive and open, the whole of Christ's life may be given, with no doubt as to the conclusion. We must look at every character as a whole. We must comprehend the marriage of Cana, the transfiguration, the sermon on the mount, the storm on the lake, in the same view with the grave of Lazarus, the widow's son, the tears of Magdalen, and the agony of Gethsemane; let these be combined into a perfect whole, which has surmounted the tide of human time, and made the waters reflect its image from generation to generation, and we shall understand *his* feeling who exclaimed, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel.”

REV. B. KENT.

*Norwood.*

## Gems of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Eighteenth.

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master!” &c.—2 Kings, vi. 15—17.

### SUBJECT :—*Helpers of the Good.*

THE context illustrates two circumstances too frequently overlooked, but ever demanding the recognition and study of mankind :—First. *The value of a good man to his country.* The Syrian monarch makes war with Israel : his counsels are formed, his arrangements are complete, and sanguine are his hopes of victory. But there is a *good* man in Israel—ELISHA—who reads the hidden purpose of the Syrian despot, sounds the alarm, puts his country on its guard, invokes heaven, and thus confounds the wily stratagems, and thwarts the murderous purposes, of the foe. “So the bands of Syria came no more unto the land of Israel.” True piety is the source of true patriotism ; its prayers and prophecies are the sure “defences” of nations. This idea is dawning on the world now ; and in coming periods will blaze in broad daylight on mankind. We shall one day see that the victories of truth and prayer were the only victories that ever served the interest of any nation, and that many a pious man, who lived in obscurity, and died under oppression, conferred greater blessings on the commonwealth than those statesmen and warriors whose patriotism has been emblazoned in history, and sung in verse. Secondly. The context illustrates *the source of a wicked man’s weakness.* Why did not this Syrian tyrant succeed in his plans ? The words which one of his servants addressed to him explain the cause :—“Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.” His projects would not bear the light. As a principle, wicked men would seldom, if ever, realize



their ends were there a prophet to unveil their hearts, and publish all the sensual, selfish, blasphemous, and dishonest thoughts, that transpire in the hidden chamber of the soul. Wicked tradesmen, lawyers, statesmen, and others, succeed only as they conceal their hearts from public view. Let some prophet, like Ezekiel of old, break open the barred door of their "chamber of imagery," and expose the hideous forms "portrayed upon the wall," and the impious works that are wrought "in the dark," and forthwith they will lose all public sympathy, patronage, and support. O my soul, cherish thou thoughts that shall bear a prophet's fiery glance—principles that will grow, bloom, and look attractive in the daylight, and purposes that will commend thee to the divine consciousness of brother spirits, and to the favor of the EVERLASTING.

I proceed to state, with the utmost brevity, a few general truths, suggested by the incident before us:—

I. That the good are often placed in circumstances to require external help. Elisha and his servant were, at this time, at Dothan. The Syrian king, enraged with the prophet for frustrating his military designs on Israel, sends "horses and chariots, and a great host," in pursuit of him. The mighty army "came by night, and compassed the city about." Early in the morning the prophet's servant beheld the armed and ruthless multitudes drawn up around his master's home. Here are enemies which the prophet himself could not subdue, perils from which his unaided power could not extricate him.

Faint symbol this of the spiritual enemies that surround our dwellings! True, in these days, the antagonists of the good are not so outwardly visible now as they were in times that are past. The *great enemy* does not send forth his hosts now, garbed in the attire of the persecutors. They appear not amongst us in the grim and demon forms of the Julians and the Neros, the Lauds and the Bonners; they assume an habiliment more consonant with the tastes of this civilized era. Their forms fascinate rather than terrify.

They seek to draw rather than to drive. But still, are they less deadly in their aim, or formidable in their power, because they change their garb, drop the sword, and stretch out the hand of false friendship? It is not the plundering of our property nor the wounding of our bodies that injure us most, but the corrupting of the soul. The awakening within our spiritual natures an impure suggestion may work a far more fearful ruin with our interests than incarcerating us in dungeons, or sending us to the martyr's stake and flames. I call those *forces* mine enemies that are unfavorable to my spiritual interests. Whatever dims my inner vision, and tends to veil from me the sublimities of the "Unseen;" whatever deadens my sensibilities of duty, and interferes with the free and vigorous play of my faculties; whatever draws me from the eternal future, and links me to the transient present; whatever cools, materializes, and contracts, my sympathies, and keeps me more in connexion with the contingent than the absolute; whatever depresses me in my struggles to reach that ideal of perfection dimly portrayed on my soul, but drawn out in living loveliness in the life of Jesus; whatever forces, I say, act thus, I call, with emphasis, my foes. And do not such foes surround us? Tell me of a period when "sinful lusts," which "war against the soul," were more potent and active than now? Our civilization is little more than a perfection in those arts that minister to the senses, pander to the appetites, and gratify desires of the flesh. When did worldliness ever wield a more wide and mighty sway? When were the votaries of MAMMON so numerous and enthusiastic in their devotions? The deepest cry of the age seems to be, "My soul thirsteth for gold." When did corrupt literature scatter over the social soil the seeds of error, impiety, and licentiousness, to such an extent as now? We are as truly hemmed in by antagonistic forces as was Elisha by the horses and chariots and hosts that encompassed him at Dothan. As we glance at them, the impression of the prophet's servant comes over us—"Alas, master! what shall we do?" We require the help that Elisha had—help from without—from heaven.

II. That there are helpers vouchsafed superior to the antagonists. "And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." It is generally supposed that the reference is here to the angels "that excel in strength," and that they were the horses and chariots of fire that came to the prophet's help. Angels are the hosts of God, and "the body-guard of the good"—ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation. This doctrine is so antecedently probable, so clearly revealed in scripture, and so generally believed, as to require no evidence.

It is to their *superiority* that our attention is now called; and, first, *they are "more" in number than the foe*. If we confine our attention to merely what we see in this world, we shall conclude that the agents of evil are the most numerous; a wider survey of the general realm of spiritual being, as suggested by philosophy, and as revealed in the Bible, presents an opposite view. As malformations in nature are few compared with symmetrically organized existences, so evil spirits are few compared with the good. The great cities, principalities and hierarchies of the universe, are loyal subjects of the great King, and zealous agents in promoting his will: it is but a little province that has thrown off its allegiance. Hell is but a withered leaf in the waving forest of life—a flickering spark in the starry vault of being. It is our happiness to know that evil is the exception in the universe—good is the rule. That evil exists as a contingency it might or might not be, but good exists by an absolute necessity. It is, and must be, because God is, and must be. Secondly, *They are "more" in the instrumentalities they wield*. The agents of evil are not only fewer in number, but inferior also in their armor. Falsehood, selfishness, wrong, these are their miserable weapons; and are they not weakness compared to truth, love, right, the weapons of the good? Aye; they can no more stand before them than "dry stubble" before the raging fire—the gloom of the night-heavens before the rising sun. The history of the world gives many instances of one man, with truth and right on his

side, subduing countries under the reign of falsehood and wrong. Thirdly. *They are "more" in their invincible determination.* The power of a moral intelligence in any operation will not be entirely or chiefly determined by the instruments he employs, but by the strength of the purpose under which he acts. A man with a weak purpose, however great his advantages, will not do much. Now, the agents of evil can have no invincible purpose, for the obvious reason that their consciences—whose sanctions can alone give invincibility—are not on their side. Just as far as any being is under the influence of evil, he must be fickle, turbulent, and timid. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." Fourthly. *They are "more" in the authority under which they act.* The Bible teaches that the angels of evil are under the control of one master-spirit of darkness—the prince of the power of the air; but those of the good are under the authority of the INFINITE. His spirit inspires them—his will they obey—his energy is their strength. Satan, the master of the evil spirits, is himself the creature and slave of God. The moral usurper cannot move or breathe but by the permission of *Him* who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Truly, then, my pious friend, however great thy spiritual foes, thy helpers are greater. To the eye of sense, indeed, thou seemest to wrestle against fearful odds. Wealth, fashion, influence, habits, dogmas, customs, and even numbers, seem against thee; but "fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Open the eye of faith, and look beyond the boundary line of sense, and thou shalt see that the great "mountain" of universal being is "full of horses and chariots of fire round about" thee.

III. That the superior helpers of the good are not seen by all. Elisha saw the celestial helpers, but his servant saw them not—saw nothing but the enemy. The one, consequently, stood calm amidst the gleaming and rattling weapons of the Syrian army, the other was all perturbation

and alarm. Thus men under similar circumstances receive different impressions. The event which whelms one with alarm inspires another with heroism and hope. The reason of this is, that some have eyes to see only the evil in things, others to see the good as well. Why is this? Why is it that all men cannot see the spiritual helpers that surround them? Several reasons might be assigned. There is, for example, the *tendency to judge after the senses*. The majority of men, like the servant of the prophet, see only with the physical eye. Although true philosophy shows that all that comes within the cognizance of the senses are shadows, not substances—semblance, not essence—they reversely consider the palpable and tangible only as real. *Spirits*, therefore, which lie beyond the line of sense, and which are the *living creatures* in all the “wheels” of human events, and in all the forms of matter, are never practically realized, and often theoretically ignored. There, again, is *the habit of referring everything to secondary causes*. This habit allows of no room for God, nor for spiritual interpositions, but in miracle. What is regular it calls *natural*; what is miraculous alone is divine. It sees God in holding the sun over Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Agelon, but sees nothing of him in rolling these stupendous bodies, age after age, in their spheres, with an undeviating regularity, and a swiftness incalculable. I say nothing of the irrationality of this habit, nor of its prevalence, of which there can be no question. All I say is, that, since God helps us through natural laws, this habit manifestly prevents men from seeing the helpers he sends. There is also a *gloominess of disposition*. This is sometimes a cause. There are men who will not see good. They hear no music in the harp of love—they see no sunshine in the unclouded sky of noon. Of this earth, even when robed in its summer beauty, or laden with autumnal wealth, they sing, or rather moan, “Lord, what a wretched land is this, that yields us no supply.” The horses and chariots of mercy may move around them as celestial guards, yet they cry, “all these things are against me.” There is yet another cause—namely,



want of sympathy with God. Strong or earnest sympathy with a being always induces the mind to bring it near—near to the inner eye and heart. By this law we bring the distant near—cross oceans and continents. Yes; from worlds beyond the grave the imagination wafts the loved One home to our inmost breasts; and we see the form, and hear the voice again. Had we this sympathy with God and holy spirits, we should set them always before us. Jesus had this, and he said, “Ye leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”

IV. That the seeing of these spiritual helpers only requires the opening of the eyes. “Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes.” The outward world is to us according to our five senses. Had we fewer, it would be less than it is; or more, it would be greater. There are probably properties in the material system which we have at present no sense to discover; or, peradventure, there may be senses closed up within, that will one day be developed, and make this old world a new thing to us. But, likely as this may be, the existence of a sense in the soul for seeing *spiritual* existences is more probable. I am not disposed to pronounce all who have stated that they have seen such beings, either as fanatics or impostors. The *a priori* wonder is, not that they should be seen, but that they are not more generally perceived. We are related to the material world, and we have senses to discern material existences. We are, confessedly, more intimately and solemnly related to the spiritual, and is it not natural to expect that we should have a sense to see spiritual being? Were such a sense to be opened within us, as the eye of the prophet's servant was now opened, what visions would burst upon us! The microscope gives to us a new world of wonders; but were God to open the spiritual eye, what a universe of worlds would be revealed!

Ah, my sceptic brother! deniest thou a spiritual world? Where is thy reason? Wilt thou plead the fact that thou hast never seen a spiritual existence? This, assuredly, will



not serve thee. Wilt thou permit a deaf man to deny that a thunder-storm never rent our cloudy atmosphere, because he has never heard the terrific roar; or a blind man to deny that a rainbow has never spanned these skies, because he, forsooth, has never seen the beauteous arch? Why, then, shouldst thou deny a spiritual world? Before the eyes of the prophet's servant were opened, he might have denied the existence of these helpers. When his master spoke to him of them, he might have said within himself, "Has my master lost his reason, or is he dreaming? I see nothing on the mountain but the Syrian host." All at once, however, his eyes were opened, and what a scene burst upon him!—"the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Even so it will be with thee, my friend: ere many days shall pass, God will open thine eyes: and that spiritual world in which thou art now living, and whose existence thou deniest, will burst in awful sublimity upon thine astonished soul!

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#### Analysis of Homily the Nineteenth.

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy," &c., &c.—2 Pet. i. 18, 19.

#### SUBJECT :—*Progressive Evidence.*

THERE are two ways in which places become regarded as sacred—by *the consecration of priests*, and by *the associations of the pious*. The former has neither reason nor scripture on its side: it insults the understanding, deludes the ignorant, and clothes the priesthood with a perilous power; it pleads the scriptures of a ceremonial people, living in a ceremonial age, and refers to the temple of Solomon as its authoritative precedent. But the enlightened and thoughtful trace it ever to the craft of the selfish hieratic, and the credulousness of a superstitious populace. Thank God, like all impostures, it is waning in

the light. It is a cloud through which the rising sun of popular intelligence has sent his piercing ray, and shall sweep from the horizon soon. The other way of consecrating places—namely, by the associations of the pious—is natural and right. It is founded on the laws of our spiritual nature. The scene of transfiguration was made a “holy mount” to Peter in this way. In itself it was not more sacred than the hills on which pagan Rome was built; but Peter received these deep spiritual impressions there, and, by a law of his mind, he involuntarily transferred these to the place. All holy men have “holy mounts.” Real sacred persons will ever have sacred places. Wherever the tear of penitence has flown, the rebellious will has surrendered, and the quickened conscience ascended the throne; wherever the great vow has been made, the consciousness of forgiveness received, and the bright lamp of hope kindled within; wherever the moral heavens of the soul were parted, the bright visions of God and duty entranced the imagination, and filled us with the sublimities of devotion; wherever we have felt the bright cloud of love spread over us, heard the voices of the distant and the dead, beheld the “transfiguration” of the earthly into the heavenly; wherever these spiritual incidents occurred—in vales or meads, in rustic lanes or cultured gardens, on the bosom of sloping hills, or on the brow of mountains, in shops or sanctuaries, on ocean or on land—the scene will ever be sacred to the spirit, because of the sacred impressions there received. The place that is thus holy to one may not be thus holy to another. This mount was holy only to the three who witnessed the scene, and experienced the emotions it awakened. The other apostles would not probably speak of it as holy. Jacob’s holy place was where he wrestled with the angel until the break of day; Paul’s the spot on which he fell, beneath God’s stroke of light, on his way to Damascus.

The transfiguration served many important purposes. It taught that Judaism and Christianity have a common centre. Moses, the founder of the Jewish system, and Elijah, the bold

restorer of its doctrines and forms, here meet the Founder of Christianity, and talk of the sufferings of Christ, the central fact of both economies. It taught that departed worth is still in conscious existence, and has a deep interest in all the surviving disciples of Jesus: it strengthened the Saviour for the mysterious sufferings which awaited him, and it served to qualify the disciples for the trials they had to endure, and the labors they had to prosecute. In the passage before us, it is suggested that it served, in addition to all this, the important purpose of EVIDENCE. The apostle manifestly alludes to it in order to show that he and his coadjutors were not followers of "cunningly-devised fables," but had most powerful evidence for the truths which they taught concerning Christ, and especially for the doctrine of his *powerful coming*.

The passage supplies us with the following suggestions:—

I. That of all the miraculous assurances in favor of Christianity, none are more cogent than that of the transfiguration. Peter had witnessed other miracles of Christ, and the fact that he refers to this, in connexion with the question of *evidence*, induces the supposition that he regarded this as the most important. We are frank to admit that our faith in the worth of a miracle as *proof* of a doctrine is not great. It seems to us, that before it can have aught of *convincing* power, two things must be settled concerning it:—First, that no being in the universe can perform what we denominate miracle, without the special help of God; and, secondly, that God will help no being to perform a miracle only in favor of truth. *Each* of these things must be *proved* before miracle can become an element of proof. If, however, any miracle is evidence, the transfiguration is. It addressed itself not only most potently to the senses, but also to the SOUL. The disciples did not merely *see* the cloud of mystic light, Moses and Elias, the wondrous change passing upon the person of Jesus, and *hear* the conversation that took place, and the *voice* that sounded from heaven, but *felt* within their bosom emotions of inexpressible delight.

II. That however cogent the evidence derived from the transfiguration, that derived from prophecy is greater. "We have a *more sure* word of prophecy." In the 20th verse, the apostle tells us what prophecy is: that it is not a thing of "private interpretation." Very various ideas are attached to this phrase. Some aver that it means that no prophecy can be interpreted of itself, but requires the light of history; some that the prophets themselves did not understand its meaning, but that they spoke as blind organs of the Spirit; some that it has a double signification—the literal and the spiritual; and some that it is not produced by one mind—that every prophecy implies two minds, the human and divine—that it is not the prognostic of a poetic and far-seeing genius, but the voice of God spoken through the soul. The apostle evidently means, by the term "prophecy," or *prophetic word*, the written testimony concerning Christ—the scriptures. He means, therefore, we presume, to say, that the written word of prophecy in his possession was a surer evidence in favor of the Messiahship of Christ than the "voice" of the transfiguration. The comparison is between the *evidence* of the "voice" on the Holy Mount, and the evidence of the "word" of written prophecy, and he affirms the latter to be the surer. This we can understand, and this we can believe, for the following reasons:—First. *Because prophecy gives a more comprehensive view of Christ's life than the transfiguration.* The latter presented to Peter only one isolated event in Christ's history—one phase of his wonderful character; but the former gave him the *minutiae* of his life—traced him from his birth in Bethlehem to his throne in heaven. Secondly. *Because prophecy is open to the scrutiny of a larger number of witnesses than the transfiguration.* There were only three witnesses on the mount. Prophecy has been examined by millions, and millions have witnessed to its truth. Thirdly. *Because prophecy affords a better opportunity for the formation of a correct judgment than the transfiguration.* The refulgence of the mount woke such rapturous emotions in Peter, that bore down his intellect, and dizzied his reason:

he saw, he heard, he felt, but could not *investigate*. Prophecy gives ample opportunities for the most calm, impartial, and deliberate examination.

III. That great as may be the evidence derived from prophecy, that derived from Christian consciousness is greater still. First. *One is a "light," the other a "day-star."* The word light may be translated lamp. The lamp is valuable; it cheers the poor prisoner in his cell, and guides the night-traveller on his way; but how fickle its flame, how small a portion of darkness does it penetrate and relieve! How different to the day-star far up in the dome yonder! Its radiance is steady, and wide! It gleams through the thickest clouds; it lies beyond the reach of storms; it throws its luminations over continents and worlds. All this but dimly figurates the difference between truth on the page and truth in the soul: the one is a *lamp*, the other a *star*. Truth in consciousness is indeed a star. It pierces through all the clouds of our depravity. The storms of passion cannot quench it. It reveals to us the upward realms of being, and sheds its rays upon our earthly path. Secondly. *One is within, the other is without.* "And the star arise in your heart." The external light of revelation we must not undervalue: it is a lamp shining in a dark place; but it is not to be compared with the internal light of Christian experience. Oh, to have truth, not merely as a lamp in our hands, but a central star in the firmament of our souls! Thirdly. *The one is the means, the other is the end.* How long is the "light"—the lamp—to shine? "Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your heart." The great design of the external revelation is to kindle up this star in the heart. Its grand disclosures will be of no real and enduring worth to us unless this be done. Fourthly. The one is the *certain harbinger of everlasting day, the other is not.* The Bible, whilst it is always necessary to kindle this orb of Christian consciousness within, does not always do so. Its lamp-light has fallen on millions that have lived and died

morally in the dark, but this "day-star of consciousness" is a certain harbinger of a glorious day. As sure as it shines, the sun is on its march, and it shall rise. Its beams shall soon skirt the horizon, and play upon the summits of the lofty hills. It shall not pause until it touch the meridian, and pour its rays over the whole hemisphere of soul, thawing every frozen fountain of the heart into love, quickening every latent germ into life, and making the whole beautiful as Eden, and fruitful as "the garden of the Lord."

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### Analysis of Homily the Twentieth.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews!" &c., &c.—John xix. 1—7.

### SUBJECT :—*The Threefold Sin.*

ALL sinners, in all places and periods, may be divided into three classes—those who sin without conviction, those who sin against conviction, and those who sin from conviction. In this passage we have a type of each : the soldiers represent the first, Pilate the second, and the chief priests the third.

I. Those who sin without conviction. See what a vile part these soldiers play in this tragedy of unequalled wrong. They wove a crown of piercing thorns, and placed it on the tender brow of Jesus, and "put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands," &c., &c. Beside the *injustice* and *cruelty* of all this, there are two elements of character which this conduct of these soldiers develop, always the most contemptible, and ever too prevalent—*ridicule* and *obsequiousness*. Foolish and wicked men! they trifled with the sublimest reality in the universe in order to *please their masters*. These two



elements are often conjoined : ridicule is frequently the hand-maid of servility. The men who deal most in banter, burlesque, satire, and lampoon, have generally masters they are seeking to please. They lack manly independence.

These soldiers seem to have had no conviction ; they did what their superiors told them, and what they knew would please. This class of sinners is very numerous ; it comprehends all thoughtless assistants in commerce, who cheat the customer in order to please the employer ; all political officers, who perpetrate moral wrong to serve their sovereign ; all soldiers, who sell their consciences to their generals.

II. Those who sin against conviction. Listen to Pilate,—“ Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.” And yet this man pronounced the sentence of death. The case of this man shows that to sin in this way is a very *difficult* thing. How his conscience opposed him ! how his better nature struggled against the popular sentiment that was urging him on to the dreadful deed ! Several attempts did he make to avoid the fearful crime. In order to appease the wrath of the multitude, he points them to the suffering Jesus, and says, “ Behold the man ! ” as if he had said, How can you press me to condemn such manifest innocence as this ? Again and still again did he declare to them that he found no fault in him. Yet, alas ! his love of power and applause triumphed over his conscience, and he pronounced the sentence. Sinning against conviction is always (1) *the most hard work* ; (2) *the most hellish work*.

III. Those who sin from conviction. “ The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.” The law they refer to is in Deut. xviii. 20. Sincere pagans, heretics, and persecutors, belong to this class. Whilst there is no religion without sincerity, there is often sincerity where there is no religion ; and sincerity without religion has ever wrought fearful enormities. It is not sufficient for a man to believe that he is doing right—he *must have sufficient evidence for his belief*.

### Analysis of Homily the Twenty-First.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white:" &c.—Rev. iii. 4.

SUBJECT:—*True Goodness amidst Social Degeneracy.*

I. That true goodness can exist under external circumstances the most corrupt. Sardis was one of the most dissolute cities of ancient times; but here were Christians. Man is not the creature of circumstances.

II. That true goodness, wherever it exists, engages the specific attention of Christ. Christ noticed the goodness in Sardis; and why? (1) Because it is the highest manifestation of God on earth. (2) Because it is the result of his mediatorial mission. (3) Because on it depends the progress of humanity.

III. That true goodness will ultimately be distinguished by a glorious reward. "Walk with me," &c. The language implies three ideas:—(1) *Triumph*; (2) *Fellowship*; (3) *Progress*.

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## The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 108.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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### FOURTH SECTION.—Matt. iii. 1—12.

#### *The Ministry of John.*

THERE are two classes of men—those that are made *by* the times, and those that are made *for* them. The former have ever constituted the great bulk, and still are the "millions." They are the moral products and portraits of their age; they reflect its spirit, they echo its sentiments. They are to it as

straws on the current—as clay in the hands of the potter, moulded by its plastic force. The other and smaller class have but little in common with the prevalent disposition of things; they do not flow with the stream. On the contrary, they breast the billows. They have an individual energy: they generate their own thoughts, and work them out in their own way, for their own end. Thus they stamp their own impress on the age, often work revolutions, and create eras. To this class John the Baptist belonged. He was, emphatically, made *for* the times. He was consecrated from his birth to the work of a reformer. His youth he spent in ascetic devotions. In the lonely desert, communing with nature and with God, studying the law and the prophets, he trained his great faculties for the great work to which he was called. Here he appears in public for the first time; and from the banks of the Jordan, surrounded by teeming multitudes of his countrymen, he calls, in thunder, for REFORMATION. The reader who wishes to get a full explanation of the phrase, “kingdom of God,” should consult critical expositions on the subject;\* and those who feel interested in the polemics of John’s baptism, must look elsewhere for help. We have neither space nor soul for the controversy. There are three great truths which this passage develops:—First. *That the system of Jesus is a system of divine rule.* “It is the kingdom of God.” Christianity is not a subject for mere intellectual study or belief, nor is it merely a ruling power. All false religions are ruling powers. It is the ruling power of God—God reigning, by his truth, over the reason, heart, and conscience of man. Secondly. *That reformation is indispensable to the enjoyment of this system.* “Reform, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” Thirdly. *That the effecting of this reformation is one of the greatest ministries of man.* This mission was John’s. He had an insight to the heart of his age: he discerned the sensuousness of soul, the hollowness of profession, the formality of worship, the spirit of Phariseeism, that everywhere pre-

\* See Olshausen *in loco*.

vailed. He knew that, with all this, they would never receive the spiritual doctrines that were about to be proclaimed by Him of whom he was the humble servant, and the honored herald. Hence his cry for reformation—a cry whose blast rung through the heart of his country, and drew forth its thousands to the banks of the Jordan. Reformation became his master-thought, and the prayer and purpose of his life. We are much mistaken if there be not now, in our country, an amount of sensuousness and formality, in relation to Christianity, if not equal, nearly approximating to that which existed in connexion with Judaism, when the Baptist came forth to public life from the solitudes of the desert. *Reformation seems to me as truly necessary to prepare our age for the true spiritual teacher as it was to prepare Judea for the ministry of Christ.* We want, confessedly, teachers that will present Christianity in its purest forms of thought, and widest aspects; that will bring it forth, not in the technicalities of theology, but in the free language of man's life—not from human schools, but from the mountains of Capernaum and the shores of Galilee; that will rather breathe it in gales of life-thought than enunciate it in the stiff forms of logic. Yet how many congregations shall tolerate such men! Let them come, and how many "oracles in the temple" will slyly insinuate that they are "tainted with German philosophy," or, more manfully, though not less unjustly, denounce them as heretics! Verily, then, we want men now to do a great work like that which the Baptist did—thunder reformation in the ear of a sensuous and formal people, and prepare the way for a class of Christian teachers that shall more fairly represent the system of Jesus, unfold its doctrines as congruous with the laws of reason, present its provisions as commensurate with the wants of the soul, and proclaim its promises as equal to the loftiest aspirations of humanity.

These remarks suggest the propriety of regarding John's ministry, as disclosed in the passage under review, as a type of the ministry needed for an age of religious sensuousness and form, in order to prepare it for a higher teaching.

# A HOMILY

ON

## Man-Growth.

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“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things,”  
&c.—Ephes. iv. 15.

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THE true growth of humanity is the master idea of these words, and the idea which I am desirous of bringing under your reflective attention in this discourse. Happily, the terms of the context are so simple, and the drift of the writer so obvious, as to require no critical observations as preliminary to our main purpose.

I. *That man's highest interest consists in the true growth of his spiritual nature.* I repeat, the true growth of his *spiritual nature*. The apostle is not speaking of certain principles or faculties as growing, but of *man*. In popular religious teaching, or rather speaking, it is not uncommon for the high and everlasting interest of man to be represented as if it consisted in the growth of some mystic entity, mysteriously implanted in him, or engrafted upon him, rather than in the growth of his spiritual self in the entirety of his germinant powers. Souls, to grow truly, must grow as bodies grow—grow as organic wholes. As the heart, head, limbs, and varied organs of the body grow, our spiritual faculties and powers must grow—simultaneously, and in their due proportions. This growth, mark ye, is here held out as our highest destiny. Our apostle speaks of it as the grand end at which we should all aim, the ultimate result of Christ's mediation, and of the consequent ministries of those “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers,” whom he has appointed in his church.

For further illustrations of the truth, let me direct your attention to the following points of thought :—

1. *The constitution of the soul.* The soul has a capacity for indefinite growth. It is too often spoken of as if it were a vessel, which it is our duty to fill up with virtue and knowledge ; or a block, which we have to mould into certain forms of grace and loveliness ; or a soil, whose fallow ground we have to break up, and into whose bosom we have to deposit the seed of goodness and truth. Such views of the soul are so partial as frequently to give a wrong idea of its nature. If the spiritual existence is to be represented by material objects, I select the seed as the fairest type. It contains the germs of all that it will ever become.

Lo ! on each seed, within its slender rind,  
Life's golden threads in endless circles wind ;  
Maze within maze the lucid webs are roll'd,  
And as they burst, the living flame unfold.

A comparison between barbarous hordes and civilized states—between Milton with his toy in the nursery, and the sightless bard thrilling the ages with his harp—furnishes obvious illustrations of man's capacity for growth. There is, however, one peculiarity in this spiritual growth. The *individual* germ of every other life exhausts itself in growing, but in growing, mind seems to increase its capacity for growth. The soul which reaches the highest point, however advanced in years, is the most spring-like and youthful ; the morning dew lies on its budding powers. Exhaustless are the germs within these breasts of ours—germs that shall appear in new branches of vigor, new forms of beauty, and new clusters of fruit, as ages run their round. But in addition to this capacity for growth, there is, in our constitution, an innate and ever-pulsing desire for it : men are nowhere satisfied with the point attained. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth for a higher stage. The desire of the child to reach the stature of physical manhood but dimly shadows the impulse of the inner nature to ascend : it seeks to burst the shell, and spring into a life where it shall have a wider range, and play a nobler part.



2. *The blessedness of being.* Our blessedness greatly consists in devout admiration of the beauty and sublimity of the outward universe, and in reverent adoration of HIM who built and beautified all. But this depends on soul-growth. To dwarfed hearts, creation is a commonplace that kindles no rapture, and God an object that commands no worship. They have nothing, therefore, in the vast realm of being that can evoke within them those emotions which are the true "rivers of pleasure." To have a great universe and a great God, we must have great souls. The creation, to a man spiritually growing, is like a beautiful landscape to him who, on a summer's morning, scales some lofty hill—it widens and brightens with every step. The objective is measured and characterized by the subjective. God and his universe are to us according to the growth of our souls.

3. *The representations of the Bible.* The doctrine I am maintaining—namely, that man's highest interest consists in the growth of his spiritual nature—is everywhere taught in the scriptures. The psalmist represents the "blessed" man to a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf doth not wither, and which bringeth forth its fruit in its season; Hosea, as casting forth its roots and branches like Lebanon; Christ, as a branch engrafted on him as the living vine, and deriving from him its life, vigor, foliage, and fruit; Paul, as passing from a child to a young man, and from a young man to a father in Christ—as having the "inner man" strengthened, and constantly renewed, amidst the perpetual waste of the outer; and, in the context, as progressing unto a "perfect man"—to the full measure of Christ's stature.

Such considerations, I imagine, are quite sufficient to commend to your credence the doctrine in question. Do not, my friend, superstitiously look for anything to be engrafted on thy nature to make thee good and great. The goodness and greatness can only be in the true growth of that spiritual nature which God has given thee. Thou canst never become greater than thy nature. Shouldst thou find a home at last amidst the celestial scenes of the good, there will come a

period when thou wilt be greater than what Abraham, the man "who presses on an angel's wing," is at this moment. That point of greatness will be but the outgrowth and development of what is now in thy breast. As the acorn becomes the monarch of the forest, robed in luxuriant foliage, so thou art to become great in eternity by growth, and by growth only. As that seed, "ere it swells, contains the oak's vast branches in its milky veins," thou, in thy first stage, contained the germs of all the power and greatness that in future ages thou wilt ever reach.

II. *That Christ's example is the model of the true growth of man's spiritual nature.* "Grow up into him." The preceding verse explains the meaning of this: it is to grow up into the measure of the stature, of the fulness, of Christ. To grow like Christ is the idea. All growth proceeds on some plan: "every seed has its own body." In every grain there is, as it were, an archetype or map of all the stages of its future growth; its dimensions, form, and foliage, are all determined. The same is true in relation to animal growth. The psalmist seems to have had this idea in relation to himself; and hence he states, "In thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them;" as if he had said, "My physical being has been proceeding on a plan, even from its first stage of growth." This is a general truth. All the million forms of life and beauty that I see around me, are but the filling up of certain plans that existed before the universe was: they are but the tangible embodiment of ideas, which the INFINITE admired and loved, and "with his vital smile unfolded into being."

All this holds true in relation to spiritual growth. All moral mind, in all worlds, goes on to develop and strengthen their powers on some one definite principle. Now, there are three, and but three, principles on which we can conceive of moral mind progressing:—First. *Without the government of conscience.* We can conceive of the mental faculties reaching a high point of energy where the conscience is in a most dor-

mant state—where it is “carnally sold under sin.” I see Byron’s fancy rising into majesty, Voltaire’s intellect into imperial power, Napoleon’s will into invincibility: but with all this growth, *conscience* is dead—dead as the stone. Secondly. *Under the government of a God-alarmed conscience.* All false consciences are comprehended in this. The world presents thousands of instances of mind growing under the control of a conscience not rightly directed:—Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus; the religious persecutors of ancient times; the crusaders, and the superstitious, both in Pagan and Christian lands, are all instances. Mind has often reached a point of wonderful energy—wild, furious, and indomitable—under the control of a wrongly-influenced conscience. Thirdly. *Under the control of a God-loving conscience.* This is the principle which Jesus embodied. His mind grew from an infantile germ to a complete manhood. He waxed strong in spirit; he grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man. I refer the whole phenomena of his wonderful life to a conscience ruled by supreme love to God. His intellect governed his passions, his conscience governed his intellect, and love to the Infinite controlled his conscience.

Now, the question is, on which of these three principles can the human soul grow happily as a whole—grow *fully* and *harmoniously*? which is manifestly the only desirable and perfect growth? As a matter of speculation, I can conceive of no other principle on which it can grow at all; as a matter of fact, I find no mind that is not proceeding on one or other of these. Which, then, is the one that meets our nature—the *true* archetype of soul-growth? Is it the first? Can that soul be said to grow whose conscience—its very *substratum*—is dead? Would you say that that man’s body had properly grown which had reached the full size and stature of physical manhood, but whose brain had remained in its infant state? Nay; you would loathe and deplore the sight. But with far less propriety could you say that that soul has grown, however vigorous its mental limbs, whose conscience—its moral brain—is undeveloped. It cannot, then, be the first. Is it

the second? Can the soul grow fully and harmoniously under the control of an *alarmed* conscience? Let the history of superstition answer—a history revealing nations of men of withered intellects and blighted powers. Will the earth burst into fruitfulness under storms that know no abatement, and clouds through which no sun ever sends its rays. Will your spiritual nature grow under the stormy roar and gloom of a conscience all terror and alarm? *Impossible!* We are left now to the third principle, the one that Christ embodied—the basis and philosophy of his moral life; and we ask, can the soul harmoniously and fully grow, under the dominion of a conscience inspired with *supreme love* to God? With the utmost confidence, I take the affirmative. Let us suppose a man in this condition: his conscience is on the throne of his being, and infinite love is its inspiration. Every avenue of the soul is open to God: he is seen in everything, and all things are seen in him. What a fair position for progress is this! All the faculties are free from the numbing influence of selfishness, and are instinct with new life. Divine love, like a new sun, has risen on the soul; it has penetrated that murky and sultry atmosphere of sensual passion, in which the spiritual energies wax languid and faint. Though, as yet, it is early morning, the sky is clear, and a healthful breeze stirs through all. What motives and facilities has such a man for study and devotion! A father dies, and leaves behind him a son devoutly attached. In a few days after the funeral, an exquisite painting is discovered, executed by him whose hand is cold in death. It is presented to the weeping son by one who takes the opportunity of exhorting him to study the product of the taste and skill of his departed sire. How would that son regard such an appeal? Would it not grate on his holiest feelings, and be felt as a rude intrusion and a heartless insult? The language of his heart to the indecorous speaker would be, *Begone!* thy speech is an offence to me. It is enough to know that this is my father's work. My filial instincts will give me a living interest in every form and shade and stroke. Or suppose a book instead of the painting.

An address to study that volume would be felt not merely as unnecessary and unbecoming, but as a grievous provocation. Filial love would say, I require no argument to induce me to read these pages: they are effusions of one to whom my soul is linked in tenderest ties. I shall go over and over every sentence, and give a mystic meaning to every word. What filial attachment would prompt in relation to that painting and that book, divine love would more potently stimulate in relation to the universe and the Bible. Had we this love—the love that Christ had—we should feel any exhortation to study nature an unwarrantable intrusion. Our supreme attachment to the Infinite Architect, would give us an interest in every part of the building, and impel us to inspect it as the highest delight of the heart; and when men urged on us the study of the scriptures, and mapped out how much we should read on one portion of the day and how much on another, we should scarcely tolerate their simpering talk, for we should “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” Here, then, is a principle on which the soul can grow, and grow for ever: and this is the principle which Christ represents, and was the inspiration of his life, and the philosophy of his history. Hence to grow, we must “grow up into him”—into his likeness.

III. *That the gospel ministry is the means of the true growth of man's spiritual nature.* “Speaking the truth in love.” No expression in the New Testament gives out, in fewer words, a more lucid or comprehensive view of the Christian ministry. It gives us the great *theme*, which is not the formulæ of men, however orthodox; nor the speculations of philosophy nor the generalities of science, but THE TRUTH. The context obviously shows that the writer means the gospel, which, in a preceding verse, he expresses as “the knowledge of the Son of God.” It is *the* truth, inasmuch as it presents to us the great fountain of truth in *the* particular aspect suited to our state as moral delinquents. Nature unfolds him as the Creator, history as the Governor, but the gospel as the

Redeemer: and this is the divine phase we require. It gives us the *function*—SPEAKING. The truth is to be spoken. Man is to convey it to man through the tremulous and penetrating energy of the living voice. Happily, the power of literature in this age is beyond debate and calculation. The pen is the autocrat of the civilized world: the souls of princes and peoples fall prostrate before it. But the tongue is mightier still. It can go deeper into our nature, and touch chords of feeling and springs of agency that no page can reach. Truth written as compared with truth spoken is as the winter to the summer sky—clear and beautiful it may be, but very cold and cheerless. Under its influence the landscapes will wither and the rivers will freeze. And it gives us the *genius*—LOVE. The truth is to be spoken, not in sectarian zeal, not in controversial strife, not in envy, not in the spirit of self-seeking, but in love. Love is to truth what the oxygen is to the air, the genial glow to the sun that without which it has no power either to generate or sustain life.

Now, the position is, that this Christian ministry, which the apostle thus expresses, is *the* means of the true growth of man's spiritual nature. This fact will, I think, be satisfactorily developed by two remarks which I proceed, with the utmost brevity, to offer:—

1. That this ministry is necessary to generate the true spiritual life of man. There can be no growth without life. All plants, animals, men, however young, cease to grow the moment life departs. Nor can there be any true growth without true life. There are false spiritual lives. What is spiritual life? The controlling disposition of the mind. Every moral mind in the universe is under the sway of some one sentiment, which permeates his nature, gives its complexion to his life, and into which might be resolved all the phenomena of his history. The spiritual life, for example, of a worldling, is avarice; of a voluptuary, is sensualism; of a philosopher, is the spirit of inquiry; but the spiritual life of *a man*, is supreme love to God. This, we have already seen,



is the only *true* spiritual life—the only principle on which human nature can harmoniously, fully, and happily develop itself. *Now, the world has not this life.* No one will venture to assert that our race has this love for its Creator; hence, the New Testament most truly represents the world as dead. The infusing of this affection into men, or, in other words, the bringing of humanity under the mastery of this principle, is the great *desideratum*—the mighty crisis in man's history, that which the scriptures designate by such terms as redemption, conversion, regeneration, adoption, salvation, &c.

I repeat, the getting of humanity from this abnormal state of indifference, or it may be of hostility, to the Maker—to One of supreme affection—is *redemption*. How is this to be effected? Have you any agency or force on earth adapted for it? If so, what? You are, I will suppose, at this moment, at enmity with a certain man. Once the closest intimacy subsisted between you; your hearts throbbed in unison, your souls intermingled their holiest secrets, and you twain were one: but now malignity burns in that breast of yours, and his very name grates on your ear. How can he expel your enmity, and recal the old affection? There is one way, and but one. Let him work the conviction into your mind that he loves you, and will make any sacrifice to serve you, and, from the laws of your spiritual nature, the end will be realized. This illustration enables us to affirm, that the agency to destroy the enmity of the human heart, in relation to God, must carry into the heart of man the conviction that God loves him. What agency on earth is adapted for this? I know but of one, and that is the gospel and its ministry. Our work is to convince the world that God loves it; to illustrate, enforce, and bear home, in all its heart-melting and transforming power, the testimony "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. The gospel ministry is necessary to administer the proper nutriment for true spiritual growth. There may be

life, but yet, without nourishment, there will be no growth. No life can live upon itself: all vegetable and animal existences require the support of outward elements. The same is true in relation to mind. However men may extol their intuitions, there would be no mental life without objective truth. There is but one mind in the universe that can live upon itself, and that is God. What is the nourishment for the true spiritual life? The narrow technicalist mentions a few theological points, and avers that they are the only "food for the soul;" whilst experience shows that no argument can reach those men. We would yet point them to analogy; send them into the fields, and remind them that the smallest flower they tread beneath their thoughtless feet, requires the light of heaven, the breathing winds, the distilling dews, the falling showers—all the gases and elements of this great world, to feed it; and we would ask them, May it not be that the human soul, the greatest existent in this world, would require something more than their narrow creed? May it not be that they themselves would grow to a nobler mould were they to seek a greater variety of food? It would be well if these men who talk so much about "food," developed a finer growth. But to our question. What is the true nourishment for this life? If you bear in mind what has already been stated—namely, that the *life is supreme love to God*—you will not be long in getting a satisfactory reply. How is love strengthened? Our love to an object ever increases as we discover in it new aspects of the beautiful and lovely, and in no other way. To grow in love towards God, we must therefore have new and varied phases of his glorious character presented to us. This is the work of the ministry. "God is love." This is the centre of Christian truth, and should be the centre of every sermon. It should flash through all argument, and burn through all eloquence. Unless it do this, pulpit logic is dry dust, and pulpit rhetoric idle rant. The ministry, with this as the key-note, would be harmonious, but never monotonous; it would involve every variety and combination of sound, and produce vibrations to touch every chord in every heart. This *one* great truth

would show to us a greater variety of hues and forms in the realms of holy thought than the sun can display of material things under the fullest radiance of his beams.

Thus, then, the Christian ministry is designed and suited to promote man's true spiritual growth, by generating the true life where it is not, and by ministering to its strength where it is. I may be told that it has not always answered this purpose, and that the pulpit has, in some cases, proved an enervating, rather than accretive, force. I sorrowfully admit it. *Two great errors* it has manifestly committed, and both starting from one cause—namely, a forgetfulness of the fact, that *the great end of the Christian ministry is to promote man's true growth*. One class of ministers, taking it for granted that it is to promote theological belief, reduces Christianity to an intellectual system, and treats it *dialectically*; and the other, that it is to promote certain sentiments, throws Christianity into sensuous forms, and treats it *artistically*. The one seeks to make men orthodox, the other to make them weep. These two classes have ever prevailed—are prevalent still; and serious evils outflow from them. The one has conducted men into an ungenial and controversial sectarianism, the other into a loathsome and sickly sentimentalism; the one into a cold rationalism, the other into a gloomy mysticism; the one into the "cloud-land" of Germany, the other into the superstitions of Rome. But as religion is neither the growth of *faith*, nor the growth of *feeling*, but the true growth of the soul, to this end the ministry should ever be directed. I feel that, regarding Christianity as a power to minister to the growth of man, I stand on firm ground in defending it against the two antagonistic forces of evil now working in the Church—scepticism and superstition. I maintain that Christianity does not, as the infidel has said, denaturalize man; that its aim is not either on the one hand to dry up the emotions, and make him the creature of logic, nor on the other hand to paralyze his intellect, and make him the simpering creature of sentiment; but to make him a MAN—a man in thought, affection, purpose,

deed—a full-grown, perfect man, in all the vigorous play of his varied faculties, and in all the generous outflowings of his heart.

Speed the day—oh, speed it!—when in every pulpit here in England, and throughout the world, Christianity shall be ministered so that *men* “may grow up;” when all preachers shall regard it as sustaining a relation to souls analogous to the relation which the free elements of nature sustain to all mundane existences—the means of life and growth; when they shall present it, not as it is in the stiff formulæ of fallible men, but “as it is in Jesus”—the special medium, the mightiest evidence, and the sublimest type of Infinite love; when they shall feel that it is not a logical dogma, but a spirit and a life—bread from heaven—refreshing water from the upmost “fountain of life;” when they shall bring its truths on souls as vernal rays fall on cold mountains, warming them into life—as rain upon the new-mown grass—as showers to water the earth; when its great doctrines shall flow from their lips in creative breathings, like those winds that swept of old over the Prophet’s Valley—informing, resuscitating, and re-organizing the slain and the dead!

There are several important practical considerations naturally springing out of our subject. I can mention but one or two. I infer, from the whole—

First. The criterion of true religion. If religion is the true growth of our nature, there need be no great difficulty in ascertaining its existence. Growth is a calculable state of being. It is a *constant process*. The child passes on to manhood every day and hour; it does not grow one day of the week and pause on the others. If you are religious at all, therefore, you are always religious. In the market, as well as in the temple, business itself is a means of grace: its very trials and temptations act on you as storms on trees—they strengthen your fibres, and deepen your roots. Growth is a *natural process*. If you are religious, therefore, there will not be the stiffness of art, nor the formality of profession, in

your devotions, but the freedom, flexibility, and gracefulness of nature. Growth is a *happy process*. All sentient existences in growing are happy. See the lambs gambolling on the sunny hills—the little bird leaving its nest for the first time, chirping gladsome notes as it makes its way from branch to branch, and tree to tree; behold the child, freed from the leading-strings of the nursery, and running on the green sward alone—what ecstasy gleams in that little face, and sparkles in those eyes! The infusion of new energy, the expansion of limbs, and the invigorating of muscle, are all connected with happiness. If you are religious, therefore—if your soul is rising into new vigor, beauty, and light, every day—you are happy. It is time for the world to know that the true religion of man has nothing to do with those occasional starts of growth—mere shoots, which take place in the sanctuary, but are blighted in the market; nor with those artificial phases of character and tones of voice, which have but little in keeping with the constitutional make and manners of the individual; nor with that morbid gloominess, which expresses itself in distorted looks and sepulchral tones: but is a LIFE distinguished by that unpausing progress, simple naturalness, and regular flow of blithesome feeling, which mark the growth of all sentient being. I infer—

Secondly. The divinity of Christianity. If our three general propositions be admitted—namely, that man's highest interest consists in the true growth of his spiritual nature; that Christ's example is the only model of this true growth; and that the right ministry of Christianity is the means, and the only means, of generating the spiritual life, and supplying the aliment necessary to its growth;—if all this, I say—sustained as it is both by the philosophy and the history of our nature—be admitted, there must come out a most appreciable, and by no means feeble, argument for the divinity of the Christian system. To what other source could you naturally refer a system so congruous with the nature, aspirations, and wants of man? Had professing Christians, in their conduct, given the world a more correct idea of religion; shown that it is

not art, but nature; not a function, but a life; not a manufacture, but a growth—a noble, manly growth, raising them intellectually and morally above others; we could have dispensed with *written evidences*: no man would have reasoned against it; all would have admitted that it was at any rate the *best food for souls*, and that they might as well argue against light and air and water as against it. I infer—

Thirdly. The value of the Christian ministry. I would not exaggerate the importance of any office that humble man is called to occupy, still less would I endeavour to magnify a vocation which I have ventured to assume. Albeit, if the ministry is the chief means of promoting the true growth of humanity, it must stand pre-eminent in the sphere of social agencies. Shall we value, in the material system, the elements and forces most essential to the “renewing of the face of the earth,” and the bringing to perfection of the seed which the husbandman has deposited in the soil, as food for man and beast, and not appreciate that Power or Agency in the spiritual, which warms with vital energy the frozen deeps, quickens the torpid faculties, and leads on to the sublimest developments of might and majesty, beauty and bliss a universe of souls?

Permit me, in conclusion, to express a hope that you, the members of the Church and congregation, will appreciate the ministry of my young brother, whom the great “Bishop of your souls” has brought amongst you.\* I know that his ministry will be thoughtful and affectionate, devout and truthful, and, in the truest sense, evangelic. But I know that no true ministry will be rightly valued unless the people do at least two things:—First, thoroughly understand that its sublime aim is *growth*. The people who look to the ministry as a power either to act on their sensibilities, to ripple the surface of their emotions, and to make them weep, or as an organ to echo their own theological notions, will never rightly

\* This homily was delivered to the church and congregation at Tooting, on the recognition of the Rev. Frederick Fox Thomas as the pastor.



value the healthiest and divinest ministry of this age. The noble mind and the true heart will never condescend *to either of these objects as an end*. Secondly, the other thing necessary for people who would rightly value a true ministry to attend to is, *to read and think*. Dr. Jenkyn, in his truly valuable address to your minister, impressed upon him the duty of reading and thinking. The inculcating of such a duty upon the young pastor on this occasion is seemly and seasonable; but the same obligation should, at the same time, be pressed upon the people. If “reading and thinking,” when addressed to him, meant merely the gathering together of the opinions which you are known to believe, and working them into sermons every week—the successive putting together of the same old things into new combinations with popular illustrations—then the obligation may rest entirely with him. You will not require either to read or think in order to value, at any rate, *his* ministry. But whatever others mean by the phrase in their “charge” to young pastors, we are assured that he who employed it this morning is too independent a thinker to attach to it such a meaning. He used it—as I wish you to understand it—in its widest, freest, and most independent sense. When I say *read*, I mean earnestly search for wisdom as for hidden treasure—to search for it in the productions of genius, in the realms of science, in the pregnant pages of bygone eras; in the events of the present, which are the products of the past, and the prophecies of the future; to search for it, in fact, in whatever contains a truth, and most wherever truth most abounds; and, above all, in the *inspired* pages of this, *the Book of God*. And when I say *think*, I mean, reflect as a man so impressed with the importance of truth as to be genuinely earnest, and with a sense of individual responsibility as to call no man Rabbi. I mean, to reflect—in the presence of the Everlasting, and in view of the retributive ages that are rolling on—on all the eye can scan, and the ear can catch, and the intuitions suggest, of the mightiest problems of our destiny. If this is meant by reading and thinking, then I say, that if your minister attend to it, and you

neglect it, you will never be able to value his ministry : he will be going farther and farther from your sympathies and souls every week ; and because he has outgrown your notions, you will soon be saying of him that he does not preach the gospel. If you should ever get into this state, will you remember this, that *your notions of the gospel are no more the gospel* than astronomic theories are the stars. Because the people do not read and think, the most thoughtful ministers are the least valued, and it has almost become a proverb that the *best studied discourses are the least appreciated*.

I have not gone, as is usual on these occasions, into all the details of the duty which people owe the minister. I am certain that if you have the proper sentiment of appreciation, that sentiment will not only suggest duties which would require hours to specify, but will cheerfully prompt you to their discharge. Intelligently value his ministry, and then, instead of allowing trifles to detain you from the sanctuary, or an idle curiosity to draw you away after the voice of every stranger, you will hail the recurrence of every Sabbath, in order that you may render to his instructions a candid, sympathetic, and devout attention. Value his ministry, and then you will respect his feelings. Your behaviour to him will be marked by courtesy, not coarseness ; the warmth of kindness, not the coldness of indifference ; the respect of docility, not the arrogance of dogmatism. Value his ministry, and then you will hold sacred his character. To you it will never be the subject of prattling gossip ; you will refer to it with caution and with reverence, remembering that his character is his power. No word of slander will you ever utter, or allow to fall on your ear. The man—the creature—who would seek, even by the remotest inuendo, to damage his reputation, you would scowl from your presence. Value his ministry, and then you will be just to his secular demands. You will not be of those who meanly avail themselves of church accommodation at the expense of others ; nor even of those who measure their contributions by the space they occupy in the sanctuary, rather than by the advantages they

receive; but you will feel a delight in the opportunity of testifying your gratitude and esteem by generous contributions. Your "carnal things," indeed, however generous, will be but poor returns for his "spiritual things"—those spiritual things inconceivably valuable in themselves, and which will often come to you through the sweat of brain and the agony of heart. Gold is a miserable compensation for the head and heart labor of a true ministry. But poor as it is, it is most inadequately given. Were the question to be put to many a wealthy man in our congregations, How much owest thou the ministry? justice would compel him to answer, Almost everything. My ideas, my intellectual activity and furniture, my morality, my friendships, my standing in society, my comfort in my family, and my religion, if I have any. And if he be asked, What return hast thou made? shame would seal his lips. He has rewarded more handsomely the lowest menial in his service, than the man who has done so much for *him* and *his*. Moreover, value his ministry, and then you will pray for him, not as a matter of form and custom, nor merely as a dictate of duty, but as an instinct of your love; not merely in your social meeting, because he is there to hear you, but in the devotions of your family, and in the secrecy of your closet.

Sincerely do I congratulate you, my friends, on your choice. For upwards of eight years I have known your minister. I have had fellowship with his intellect and his heart, and know something of both. I have sympathized with him under the rolling cloud, and rejoiced with him when the sun has shone again. His excellent pastor, who has known him from childhood, has to-day borne public testimony of his moral virtues and religious character. In that testimony my heart exulted: it raised my already-exalted ideas of his excellences, and led me to see in these services the dawn of a day whose usefulness will increase to its waning twilight. He is young, but, as his pastor has sagely said, he has "an old Book." Yes; and with that old Book, and with a free, vigorous, and independent mind, and a devout and consecrated heart, he will do great things. With hearty

good will, I commend him to your unsuspecting confidence, unrestrained love, and earnest prayers. With a joyous heart, I join my neighboring brethren in welcoming him to our locality as a co-worker in the holy cause of truth, and the progress of man. Long may he live and labor here! May your words, my brother, strengthen these people for the battle of life, break for them the spell of mortality, brighten their hour of dissolution, and help to make the life "that now is" a holy, jubilant, and useful prelude to that "which is to come!"

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Twenty-Third.

"Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream," &c.—Matt. xxvii. 19.

#### SUBJECT :—*The Dream of Pilate's Wife.*

PILATE'S conduct in this chapter is a comment upon Solomon's declaration—"The way of transgressors is hard." All things around were favorable to the course the Roman judge was pursuing: he was shielded by law; the highest authorities of the day sanctioned him; public sentiment flowed with him, and bore him on; and the issue, moreover, promised to him the acclaim of a nation's praise. Still his work was hard. There were at least two mighty spiritual forces against him—*his own conscience, and the conscience of one who dwelt nearest his heart.* The former strewed the path he was pursuing with thorns, which, in every step, perforated his moral veins, and rankled to his inmost core. It was "hard for him to kick against the pricks." The latter, too, offered no feeble opposition. It spoke to him in a voice blending all that was soft and tender in domestic love, with all that was stern and strong in moral conviction. It announced its spiritual visions, and vehemently implored, or rather demanded, desistance.

This dream develops a few facts in man's spiritual history that can never be too frequently mentioned, or too seriously pondered :—

I. The capacity of the soul for involuntary action. A dream implies this. There are two kinds of action of which the mind is capable—*voluntary* and *involuntary*. The first is *by the will*. The deed is wrought as the result of calm thought and intelligent purpose. Mighty things has man achieved, and can achieve, by the "I-WILL." A most potential *fiat* is this. The second is *with the will*. The will in this case, though concurrent, is not consulted. This class of action is of two descriptions :—First. *Instinctive*. In obvious peril, we do not ask ourselves, Shall we seek safety? In the presence of axiomatical truths, we do not ask, Shall we believe? In the view of the truly beautiful, we do not ask, Shall we admire and love? All these we do not by deliberation, but instinct. The second description in this class is *associational*: actions start not, in this case, from native impulses, but from old impressions, ideas, and mental habitudes. This is the kind of action brought before us now. It is developed in at least three cases—that of *dreams*, *morbid sensibility*, and *inveterate habit*. In the first case, it is an admitted fact that dreams rise out of the ideas and impressions already in the mind. These are at once the impulses that move the imagination, and the elements out of which it creates its visions. It was so with Pilate's wife. She had retired to rest with those ideas of Jesus of Nazareth which filled her country; and these ideas stirred her soul in her sleeping hours. Because dreams are manufactured out of what the mind has taken into it, they are not unfrequently indices to character. In the second case, examples are not wanted of persons who, somehow or other, have sunk into such a state of morbid sensibility as to have well-nigh lost their power of voluntary action. They live in an ideal world: they alternately sing and sigh amidst the airy visions of their own fancy. They have lost the "I-WILL" of their being. And, in the third case, illustrations

are also numerous. How many men now living are the bond-slaves of old associations and habits. No argument can change their opinions, no persuasion their conduct.

My friend, I know of no aspect of thy nature more solemn than the fact, that thou canst accumulate forces that will strip thee of all power of deliberate action. The habits of mind thou art now forming will grow into a river, on which thy spirit shall float along through circling ages, without end. As are thy habits, so will be that river and its course. Calmly, with crystal clearness and majestic flow, it shall bear thee on through scenes where grandeur awes and beauty enraptures, where goodness glows and Divinity dwells, if thy associations are holy; but if otherwise, it shall be rough and turbid, ever up-throwing from its depths, as it bears thee downward on its dashing surge, remembrances of thy sins, which shall scare thee with the visions of the past and the horrors of the future.

II. The susceptibility of the soul to spiritual impressions. "I have suffered many things," &c. There are two things suggested in relation to her impressions. First. *They were moral*. Her reference to Christ as the JUST person plainly indicates that her visions had a connexion with the *morality* of the work in which her husband was engaged. This susceptibility of moral impressions is the distinguishing attribute and the chief glory of our nature. We have to do with the great ideas—realities—of *law, rectitude, God*. Second. *They were painful*. "I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." The sufferings were evidently the disturbance of her moral feelings. In the visions she had of the conduct which her husband was pursuing, she felt that her *native love of justice was being violated*; and this would pain her: and that it was being violated by one she devoutly loved, and who would consequently expose himself to a Divine retribution; and this would heighten her distress.

As we have an inner eye which now seeth visions, when all the senses are closed, and an inner nature, which now suffers whilst the body indulges in soft repose, may it not be that we



shall see and feel when the body is in the dust? This reasonable conjecture is a biblical fact.

III. The tendency of the soul, when morally excited, to rectitude. This is seen in pronouncing Christ "just," and in uttering her voice against the crime. "Have thou nothing to do with this just person." All consciences, when excited, flow with the right, and say *amen* to all that is just. Judas is an illustration of this. When his conscience was touched, he returned the pieces of silver, and said, "I have betrayed innocent blood." His excited imagination dyed that money he once loved in the gore of innocence—made it red-hot with the fires of retribution. He could not hold it. All consciences in the nether regions are with God. From the abysmal midnight, they groan to heaven an *EVEN SO*.

A few home-words to thee, my friend, before I quit this suggestive theme. See, in this subject, *thine interest as a man*. Thou hast a soul ever open to the touch of God. No darkness can hide thee from his presence, no bolts can bar him out. From the thoughts thou art now cherishing, and the habits thou art now forming, shall start visions either of rapture or of woe: out of them thou art to weave the web of destiny, grow the harvests of the interminable future. Look well, then, to the associations thou art forming; seek to have every floating idea and flowing feeling crystallized into a love that shall both ensure and reflect the smiles of heaven. Learn, too, from this subject thy duty, if thou *art an enlightened man*. If thou hast dreams and visions about the right, do as Pilate's wife—lift up thy voice in its favor, and peal protests against the wrong. And if thou art yet a wicked man, see in this subject thine *inexcusableness*. Thou hast been warned. Born in a Christian land, in this bright age, more voices have protested against thy wicked course than ever fell upon the ear of Pilate—voices from the nursery, the school, the sanctuary—voices, some of which were addressed perhaps by parents that are in the dust, and ministers, and friends that are no more.

## Analysis of Homily the Twenty-Fourth.

"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman," &c. &c.—John iv. 27—30.

SUBJECT :—*The Forces of Prejudice, Truth, and Influence.*

THIS incident illustrates three things :—

I. *The force of human prejudice.* The disciples "marvelled that he talked with the woman." Their prejudice was either against his speaking to a *woman*, for the Jews, as well as other ancient peoples, considered the woman as very inferior to the man, and they might therefore have wondered why the great Teacher should talk to a weak-minded woman about his great mission; or their prejudice might have been against his speaking to a *poor* woman, as if they considered it beneath the dignity of the Messiah; or, lastly, it might have been against his speaking to a *Samaritan* woman, for the Jewish rancor excluded the Samaritans from all the civilities of life. Either prejudice would be equally foolish, for the truth of Christ was not to be restricted by *sex*, *condition*, or *country*. The fact, however, that Christ acted contrary to their prejudice, shows two things :—(1) *That the prejudices, even of good men, should never deter us from attending to duty.* (2) *That the sincerity of Christ as a teacher is unquestionable.* Impostors consult prejudices.

II. *The force of Christ's truth.* "The woman then left her water-pot," &c. (1) The development of the force. *The secular gave way in her mind to the spiritual.* She left her business in order to preach. "Come, see a man," &c. (2) The secret of the force. "He told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" CONGRUITY WITH HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE SECRET OF THIS FORCE.

III. *The force of individual influence.* Verses 30 and 39 :—"Then they went out." *Man is the subject and source of influence.* The influence of the woman shows three things :—(1) How Christianity can spread; (2) how Christianity will spread; (3) how Christianity does not spread.

# The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 136.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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## FOURTH SECTION.—Matt. iii. 1—12.

### *The Ministry required for an Age of Religious Sensuousness and Form.*

Now, several of the characteristics of John's ministry stand out in these verses in bold outline and suggestive significance.

I. *His ministry was moral in its aim.* His grand purpose, as we have seen, was *reformation*. But what kind of reformation did he seek? Was it an *intellectual* one? Did he preach to settle metaphysical disputes in theology, or to establish the theoretical accuracy of his own beliefs; to confound heretics, and to glorify the "sound in the faith?" Was orthodoxy in sentiment his grand aim? Did he labor to buttress an old school, or to form a new one? No; he had a sublimer end than this. His object was more with the heart than with the understanding; more with vital motives than with speculative beliefs; more with souls than with systems. Was it an *institutional* reformation that he sought?—a reformation, for example, like that which the morally loathsome Henry the Eighth produced here in England, and which, though it is the chief glory of superficial Protestantism, and the rallying-point of parties, must be regarded by all thoughtful men as a thing of parchment rather than of principle—starting from the wicked caprice of an individual rather than from the honest conviction of a nation—leaving, therefore, the moral

heart of the empire as Papal and corrupt as ever? No ; such was not the reformation that our Reformer sought—he aimed at the reformation of Judea's *heart*. “Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”—Let your outward actions be not something put on, but something produced—“fruits ;” and fruits springing from inward repentance. He wished to see his country change its conduct, systems, and institutions—as the landscape its dress—and as birds their plumage—by the infusion of new life. This feature of John's ministry I hold to be of transcendent importance. No ministry, whatever its pretensions, is valid or worth having that strives not supremely for this moral reformation. There are three facts that show this :—First. *That all systems of religion, erroneous either in idea or practice, spring from wrong moral principles.* Take, for instance, Papalism as the masterpiece of the false in religion : its every absurd dogma and impious act can be traced to such moral principles as *pride, selfishness, and materialism*. These are the roots : they are the very spirits not only of the Antichrist of Rome, but of all the “many Antichrists that are in the world.” Secondly. *Systems thus erroneous may be destroyed in form, and the moral principles from which they spring remain as vigorous as ever.* In politics, we find the spirit of despotism growing after the throne of the despot has been burnt ; and in religion, we find the spirit of Popery rampant after the authority of Rome has been renounced. Indeed, the spirit of a thing often gets new vigor by the manner in which its form has been assailed, and perhaps destroyed. Thirdly, *that the great mission of Christianity is to combat and crush the moral principles of wrong.* It has to do with errors as they exist in the *heart* rather than in the head—in men, rather than in systems—in living impulses, rather than in logical propositions—with the germs of the upas, rather than with the branches. Pride, dishonesty, worldliness, carnality, and impiety, are the forces against which it directs its weapons. It seeks to save by “*teachiny us that—denying ungodliness and worldly lusts—we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*”

In all this, let me not be understood as under-valuing an accurate and extensive knowledge of biblical truth, nor of a systematic method of presenting it to the minds of men. Firmly, indeed, do I believe that the great truths, connected with the atonement of Christ as their central point, are essential to the effecting of the moral change of which I speak, and equally strong is my conviction that they will only tell successfully upon the heart, as they are made to square, in some measure, with the native philosophy and logic of the human mind. But what I insist upon is, that the *grand end of the ministry should not be theological, but moral*; not to battle for the spread of its own opinions, but for the prevalence of Christ's spirit; not to declaim against intellectual heretics, but to appeal calmly and effectually to the hearts of moral delinquents; not to deal with sects divided by opinions, but with souls one in sin; not to speak oracularly, as a dogmatist, to men's intellects, but plaintively, as a suppliant, to men's hearts, "beseeching them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God."

II. *His ministry was faithful in its appeal.* Two things here show his faithfulness:—First. His declaration of their character. Deep and solemn was his impression of the evil principles that worked in the hearts of the men around him. As a great man he had strong convictions, and as an honest man he spoke them out in terms correspondently strong; and hence he addresses them not as "dear brethren," but as "a generation of vipers"—men of specious manner, but of poisonous principles; and this he speaks not behind their back, but to their face, with his honest eyes flashing into theirs. Secondly. His faithfulness is seen in destroying the chief object of their glory. He knew that their relationship to Abraham was the foundation of their confidence, the theme of their constant boasting, that which elated them with all the arrogance of a heartless bigotry; and, with an unflinching fidelity, he says, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to

raise up children unto Abraham ;"—as if he had said, You pride yourselves in your hereditary descent, but that confers no virtue on you. Personal piety is the indispensable need and duty of all. "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." All men pride themselves in some object or other—some in their birth, some in scholarship, some in talent, some in money ; and it requires no little faithfulness in a minister to demolish all these, as having no moral merit whatever—to say right in the face of the millionaire, the scholar, the man of noble birth and high office—you are nothing—worse than nothing—a miserable compound of vile spirit and corrupt dust, without *personal moral goodness*.

III. *His ministry was symbolical in its ritualism.* The religion of heaven has ever been associated with certain ceremonies or rites. In the Jewish Church they were numerous, and often gorgeous ; in the Christian they are few, and very simple. We take it that the grand end, both of the Jewish and Christian, was the same—namely to *teach*, to portray, truths to the senses. They were adumbrations—the palpable expression of ideas, and nothing more. Thus, we think, John regarded *baptism*. He did not regard it as a *regenerating* ordinance, the dream of a superstitious populace, and the fraud of a selfish priesthood ; nor as a *professional* ordinance as many have regarded it, for he evidently administered it to thousands who had no true faith, else why did they persecute and crucify "the Lord of life and glory?" nor as an *initiation* ordinance, of which there has been so much said ;—but his idea was *teaching*. So profound were his convictions of the moral defilement of his country and of its need of spiritual cleansing, that he came forth from his desert-home, determined that what he could not express in words he would in things—that symbols should supplement his sayings. Nor can we conceive of a more impressive symbol than that which he selected. As he stood upon the banks of the mightiest river in their country, baptizing all who came to him with its



waters, he gave to its calm and majestic flow a moral meaning; made its every wavelet speak to the assembled multitude—*Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts.*

John, in baptizing, did what all teachers might do, and what all earnest teachers ever have done, and ever will do—press nature into their service, make its mute objects speak, and figurate thoughts which abstract language cannot express. Indeed, so *unutterably* strong were his convictions of the importance of spiritual reformation, that he not only made the Jordan help him to speak them, but his laboring soul made both his dress and diet *symbolic*. That rustic “raiment of camel’s hair,” so coarse and shaggy, so roughly bound together with the old “leathern girdle,” and the locusts and wild honey on which he daily fared, were all sermons—mute, but mighty, homilies were they on reformation. They proclaimed to his countrymen—who prided themselves in their dress, and sought for sumptuous fare, as multitudes have ever done, and are doing still—his conviction that men’s high interest and true greatness are independent of both; *that there was something transcendently more important for humanity than either food or raiment.*

IV. *His ministry was self-abnegating in its spirit.* Humility, unaffected and profound, pervaded the mind and ministry of this great man. “He that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” I am not truth, but merely its *voice*. I am but the echo: the Speaker is coming. The channel—the original fountain—will soon outpour among you its own living streams. My ministry is but *water*; it touches the outward surface, and that is all. The ministry that is coming is *fire*; it will burn to the inmost core, and transmute all into its own pure essence. John’s humility might be referred to the fact that he was suitably penetrated with the sense of his position. *Physically*, he stood where the high hills that overshadowed him, and the stream, fraught with historic associations, that rolled at his feet, would tend to

overawe his spirit. Majestic scenery has ever a power to destroy our egotism. *Historically*, he stood between two wonderful economies. The magnificent theocracy with which the hopes and sympathies of his fathers through long ages had been identified, was an orb now drawing its last ray from man's horizon, and the bright day of grace was dawning "over the gloomy hills of darkness." *Spiritually*, he stood where he was touching springs in man's destiny that would propagate an influence through endless ages. All this would serve to produce the humility here displayed.

I have briefly mentioned the more salient features in the ministry of this great man—a ministry moral, not theological, in its aim; faithful, not temporizing, in its appeal; symbolic, not superstitious, in its ritualism; humble, not dogmatic, in its spirit. Such a ministry this age pre-eminently demands. We want men who have neither the vanity to suppose that they have fully sounded the depths of theological truth, nor the arrogance to pronounce those heretic who neither adopt their notions nor use their nomenclature; but who, on the contrary, have grace to believe in their own fallibility, and, like John, in a teaching higher than their own. We want men who, instead of regarding themselves as the depositaries of truth, and speak with the authority of oracles, modestly, like John, think of themselves as a *voice*. We want men who, in passing off "life's narrow stage," will not so intimate their theological superiority over their successors as if they sought to throw the church into a premature sorrow for its anticipated loss, and to close its ears against the ministry that is to come; but who, like the noble Baptist, will withdraw from public life with a cheerful trust, pointing their contemporaries to better men; and as they sink to the tomb, proclaim, in good faith—*there are young ministers coming after us whose shoe's latchet we are not worthy to unloose.*

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# A HOMILY

ON

## Christ Treading the Winepress alone; or, Single-handed Labour.

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“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.”—Isa. lxiii. 3.

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WHETHER these words, in their primary application, refer to Maccabeus or Michael, to the great Jehovah or the holy Jesus, or some unknown personage, is a question I leave to biblical critics to determine for themselves, as best they may.\* It is my intention to apply them to Christ, partly because there is a high probability that such is their primitive relation, but chiefly because they express an unquestionable fact in his history, fraught with the most important suggestions. Probably that old Edom, spoken of in the context, with its rocky mountain nature, lying between the Dead Sea and the Eleantic Gulf; looking ever on the Jew-land like some giant foe, swollen with rage, and clouded with eternal frown; striking ever new and deeper terror into the hearts of Abraham's descendants; our highly poetic prophet may here use as a symbol of that which is the common foe of the race and the universe—SIN. Scripture analogy warrants the suggestion, and reason, experience, and religion, attest the propriety of the figure. What Edom was to Judea, MORAL EVIL is to God's creation—a constant and inveterate antagonist. To level the towering fortresses of this moral Edom with the dust, triumph over its principalities and powers, and uplift the victorious banner of truth and righteousness on its ruins, was the grand end of the

\* See Barnes *in loco*.

Messiah's mission to this earth. Yes ; his errand was that of a truly illustrious chieftain ; one who sought to destroy not existence, but evil ; not the rights and lives of men, but their sorrows and their sins ; one whose weapon was truth, whose inspiration was love, whose aim was salvation, and who essayed to build up an empire, not upon the violated rights and mangled bodies of others, but upon the self-denials and sacrifice of himself.

Now, the fact that I am desirous of fastening on your attention is, the *single-handedness of Christ's labor*. The New Testament history shows that, in the fight with this furious and frowning foe, he battled alone. Until the last two or three years of his life, he seems to have lived in entire isolation ; nor did he, during the short period of his public history, either obtain the co-operation or enlist the sympathies of the people. True, multitudes followed him in his path, and crowded around him in the varied scenes where he paused to teach a doctrine, or to work a miracle ; but what attracted them ? Was it love for his character, or sympathy with his mission ? No ; it was either an idle curiosity or a sordid selfishness. Even his disciples, in the fiercest of the conflict, "forsook him, and fled." However dishonorable to our race, the fact must be admitted, *that he trod the winepress alone, and that of the people there was none with him.*

This *single-handedness* of Christ's engagements illustrates the four following facts :—

I. THE DEPRAVITY OF HIS AGE. I grant that the fact of a people deserting an individual in his enterprise, and leaving him to work out his purposes single-handed and alone, is of itself no evidence of their depravity. All depends upon three things in the individual—his *personal character*, *grand aim*, and *practical methods*. If the personal character was *un-social* ; if the man was cold and reserved ; if, with an ascetic eye, he looked on society with suspicion, and felt neither interest nor confidence in any one but himself ; his contemporaries could not be held *blameworthy* for not associating

with him; for it is a law, that he who would be loved must love, and that he who would have friends must show himself friendly. Or if, having in his personal character a large amount of the social element, he was corrupt in his moral principles of action, it would be virtue, and not wickedness, in the people to shun him. Well would it be if popular sentiment would ever recoil from depraved characters, and leave them, in a miserable isolation, to reflect upon themselves. But even supposing his personal character to be everything to awaken the esteem of mankind, there might still be something in his *grand aim* which would warrant the people in leaving him to himself. If, from a mistaken judgment, he aimed at ends inimical to the principles of virtue and the general rights and interests of society, his contemporaries might be well justified in standing aloof from him as one embarked in a criminal and dangerous undertaking. Or, furthermore, conceding even that he had a personal character marked by everything that was lovely, and an end harmonizing with every principle of morality, and every right and interest of man, if he sought to work out his worthy purpose by an *unworthy method*, one could yet excuse the men of his age for deserting him. Instances are not rare of men of distinguished excellence who have sought noble ends by means which deserve the severest censure and reprobation. We loathe Papalism, for example, not because of the end it pursues—for that end, being the evangelization of the world, is the most grand and scriptural—but because of the means it employs; means which clash with the rights of conscience, misrepresent Christianity, and dishonor Him “who is Head over all things to the Church.”

But how stands the case in relation to Christ? Was there anything in his *character*, *aim*, or *method*, which could be pleaded in justification of the cold aloofness of his age towards him? Let his history answer: let the testimony even of his enemies reply, and we shall find that there was everything in his personal character suited to attach all hearts to him. He was pre-eminently *social*; his bosom was the home of the

kindest feelings for every man ; his whole life was the expression of love ; his very being was its incarnation. His sympathies went forth on the world like rays from the sun—genial, quickening, and for all. They radiated on every face, friend and foe. He himself was an invitation to humanity. The moral translation of every line in his history I find in the sentence, “Come unto me.” The nerve of every work, the gist of every sermon, the inspiration of every prayer, and the fountain of every tear, was sympathy for man. All the *moral principles of his character*, too, were such as to claim for him the profoundest affection of mankind. The most penetrating eye of envy and malice could find no fault in him. No enemy could convince him of sin. Even Judas—who had been introduced into the more private circle of his life—in the presence of eternity, declared him innocent ; and Pilate, too, who condemned him to death, bore impressive public testimony to his moral rectitude. The opposition he met turned him not from his course, nor did the insults he received disturb the calm flow of his love. The outward storms of excitement produced no ripple on that inner current of holy sentiment that bore him ever onward to duty, and upward to God. He moved on through society like some bright orb in a tempestuous sky : he sent his rays through the darkest clouds, and pursued his path unchecked by the fiercest hurricane. He was, verily, a “*light shining in a dark place.*” If excellence of character deserves the affection of mankind, then Christ had the highest claim to the sympathy of his age.

But, admitting the excellence of his character, it might still be asked, What of his *grand aim* ? Was it insurrectionary ? Did he aim to evoke the spirit of political discontent with the authorities and institutions of his country ? or was it self-aggrandizement ? Did he endeavour to make the circumstances and resources of the people subservient to his own personal gratification ? Was there anything in his aim incompatible with the broadest principles of justice, or the freest spirit of philanthropy ? How infinitely remote from all



these suggestions is the fact! He came to injure none, but to save all. He came to seek and to save the lost, to give knowledge to the ignorant, absolution to the guilty, joy to the sorrowful, and life to the dead. "I am come," said he, "that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." He came to restore *in* man all the enervated powers of his spiritual being, and to make them play with the harmony of freedom, the elastic bound of health, and the freshness of perpetual growth; and to restore *to* man all the forfeited rights of his spiritual being, to surround him with privileges and blessings, of which Eden, in its pristine luxuriance and beauty, was but the faintest type. In addition, then, to his moral excellence, we have the grand benevolence of his aim as giving him a mighty claim to the sympathy and co-operation of the people amongst whom he lived.

Moreover, fully conceiving the love-worthiness both of his character and aim, there is yet a question about his *method*. Was there any folly, injustice, or unkindness, in the way he endeavored to work out his purpose? No; the most perfect wisdom, righteousness, and love, characterized the whole. His method was not coercion, but instruction. All was *teaching*. His whole life was a lesson; so was his death;—a lesson whose every doctrine tallied with the laws of reason and the deep instincts of the soul, and whose every utterance, spoken or inarticulate, was intoned with an unutterable tenderness and love.

These remarks justify us in regarding the social desertion of Jesus as an illustration of the depravity of his age. If he was supremely good, they were correspondingly bad, for withholding their sympathy. The greater his virtue, the greater their sins for deserting him. Amongst what people did there ever live one possessing such mighty claims to the cordial identification of mankind? and yet was there ever one more signally disregarded and shamefully abused? Instead of rallying under his banner with a generous enthusiasm, and cheering him on his arduous way, *they turned, as it were, their faces from him, and left him to tread the winepress alone.*

“What! could ye not watch with me one hour?” Does not this rebuke—falling as it did from his lips in the depths of agony, amidst the mystic horrors of the last night, and addressed to those who had even pledged their love to him—convey an unutterable impression of the corruption of the people amongst whom he lived? His isolation signalizes the depths of their depravity, and brands them with eternal infamy.

This single-handedness of Christ illustrates—

II. THE MAGNANIMITY OF HIS CHARACTER. Although thus abandoned by his countrymen, he did not resign his mission, nor did he pause a moment in his course. He set his face as a flint, and went on to the accomplishing of the work that was given him to do. In all this, he developed a *force* of action to which we have no parallel in the annals of the world, and which is suited not only to stir within us the highest sense of the morally sublime, but to stimulate us to struggle for a greatness real and divine. There are three things about this *force* of action worthy of our consideration :—

First. *It was a force entirely independent of social help.* The sons of Adam, in their varied departments of agency, have ever derived much of guidance and stimulus from society. The *idea* of the course they adopt, they, for the most part, derive from the suggestions, counsel, and experience, of their fellow-men, and the *motive* to follow it out they gather from the sympathies and encouragements of the same source. In the vast field of the world's busy labor and daring enterprise, a real independent worker you will rarely find. Question the noblest of them, and he will refer much, both of his *plan* and *power*, to others. It is not a libel on the race, but a fact in its history, that the vast majorities, at any rate, are moved more from without than from within. Social sympathy has ever been to them, and still is, what steam is to the iron engine and wind to the canvassed bark—that which puts and keeps them in motion. Even your warrior—your *beau-ideal* of a brave man—borrows his in-

spiration from those sympathies of his country which he has either in possession or in prospect. Deprive him of this, and you annihilate his boasted courage, and paralyze his weaponed arm. Now, in sublime contrast to this tendency of the race, Christ stands before us. What in his mission did he derive from society—the *idea* or *plan*? Why, his *idea*—the idea of working out the spiritual reformation of humanity, of uniting all tribes and nations in the holy bond of brotherhood, and of connecting all in spiritual fellowship with the Everlasting ONE; and all that by the doctrine and death of himself—was an idea perfectly *original* and *unique*. It was not to be found anywhere on earth, either in book or bosom. All priests were ignorant of it; sages knew it not; nor did it ever come within the poet's dream. His *idea*, therefore, could not come from society. Nor could his *motive*. He had no one to encourage him with his sympathy. The world was against him; yet on he went.

Secondly. *It was a force involving disinterested self-denial.* To an individual possessing—as Christ unquestionably did—strong and sensitive social feelings, the pursuing a course of action repugnant to the general feelings of mankind, would require a *force* involving great self-denial. If a man could be found entirely destitute of the social element—and there may, perchance, be such persons—opposition to society would give them no pain. The happiness, however, of a social being like Christ is dependent upon a cordial intercourse with others; and he, therefore, who cuts himself off from such intercourse must sacrifice much of his well-being. Add to this the fact, that Christ sacrificed all this not for himself, but for others. There is a *selfish* self-denial. We can conceive, indeed, of an individual possessing strong social sympathies, setting himself about an enterprize which would lead to the sacrifice of all friendships, with the hope, however, of benefiting himself. In such a case there would be a kind of self-denial, inasmuch as there was a forfeiture of friendships, the sources of social pleasure; but this self-denial, after all, would be for his own interest. It would be

only another form of selfishness—the giving up of a lesser for a supposed greater good. And here, incidentally, I discharge with a sentence my obligation to the solemn conviction I have, that the aggregate of what is called *Christian* labor, in most cases, involves no self-denial at all; and, in other cases, that are emblazoned in reports, and trumpeted on platforms, are but miserable modifications of selfishness. Now, the self-denial of Christ, in sacrificing the sympathy of his age, was not for himself. It seems, indeed, that Noah, for a long period of time, in the construction of the ark, followed a course of action contrary to the general sentiment, idea, and feeling, of his contemporaries; and exposed himself, perhaps, to the cutting lampoon and indignant scorn of many whose friendships he once valued. But this denial of his was for a greater good: he built an ark *for the saving of himself and family*. In contrast with this was the self-denial of Christ: HE had no personal ends. He pleased not himself; he toiled to construct a moral ark, not for himself, for he was safe—absolutely and for ever safe—but for humanity; to bear it triumphantly over the deluge of sin and sorrow to the Ararat of purity and peace.

Thirdly. *It was a force involving disinterested self-denial for the very men who shamefully deserted him.* When we engage in any benevolent work, and find the parties for whom we labor indifferent to our kindness, we are disposed to feel discouraged and resign; but were we to find them oppose us, and in other ways develop their hate, so feeble is our benevolence that it would probably expire. This is the analogy of human action. But here is Christ working and suffering for the very men that despise and reject him. What unconquerable love is this! He lives amidst the stormy elements of their enmity, and yet his love for them flames on unquenched and undimmed. Blessed be God! His love for man was too strong for man's enmity to destroy! "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for

us." Whatever men speak or write, hint or aver, against the Bible, they can neither give us such a specimen of greatness as figure on its pages in the life of Jesus, nor *rationaly* account for a character so unique, without accepting the testimony that he was sent of God. He is, confessedly, the embodiment of an *original force*—the living, palpable type of a greatness elsewhere unknown. He seems to me to raise his head in the history of the ages that are gone, and the times that are passing, like some green and lovely hill in the landscape, towering high above the highest altitudes, and which not only stirs us with sublimity as we gaze upon its majestic proportions, but tempts us to climb its lofty elevation in order to inhale the genial influences that breathe around; look down upon the little things below, and survey that scenery which stretches far off into the serene eternity, and is hid from all that walk beneath.

The single-handedness of Christ in his labor illustrates :—

III. THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF HIS PRINCIPLES. Here we have the fact before us, that his principles were at one time unknown to the world. They were enshrined in his own thought and affections, but nowhere else. Of the teeming myriads, his intellect alone understood them, and his heart alone felt their power. "Of the people there was none with him." But mark their history; trace them downward as they begin to flow from his lips on the mountain where he, for the first time, sat down to teach the multitude, and see how they spread. Observe them as a small streamlet welling out from an isolated font. It rolls from country to country, and from age to age. It swells in volume as it proceeds; every obstruction gives way before it. It refreshes with new life, and clothes with imperishable verdure the scenes through which it winds its benignant course; and this day we behold it bearing on its majestic bosom the soul of the world to a higher civilization and a purer religion. Observe them falling first into the world's mind: like the smallest particle of leaven into meal, it works its way through the whole; it ferments as it pro-

ceeds; the most dormant power is excited. It assimilates all it touches to itself, and will one day leaven the whole lump. Observe them, once more, under another figure, as a solitary grain of corn falling into the earth, and dying. It springs up, and its multiplied grains reach perfection, and fall as seed again. The ever-multiplying process, from age to age, goes on until it covers many a zone; and broad acres, and whole islands, are seen to "wave in ripeness, and invite the scythe of heaven."

Deeply, indeed, do I lament the limited influence which Christianity has upon the world at the present moment in mastering its demon lusts, and in rectifying and controlling its moral springs of action. Nevertheless, limited though it is, compared with the extent of population, and with the wide dominion of other forces, it is great—suggestively and encouragingly great—compared with its beginning. The little one has literally become a thousand—ay, a million. The disparity between its present influence and its commencement with One whom the people despised and rejected; between the tree outspreading its branches over nations, and the tiny seed, contemptible to all but One; is fraught with instruction. It teaches the *vital congruity between it and humanity*. What the indigenous seed is to the soil, Christ's ideas are to human souls—*things* that only require a proper lodgment to grow and multiply. Other systems have lived and flourished here because of their congruity with certain conventional forms of thought, artificial tastes, and modes of life. As these have changed, the systems have lost their power; as these have departed, the systems have grown obsolete. When we find, therefore, principles growing amongst every tribe of mankind, under every class of circumstances, in every climate under heaven, and in every age, since Jesus first opened his mouth to teach them, we are forced to the conviction that they have a *vital* connexion with our common humanity. They are for man, and man for them; the "incorruptible seed" which will live and abide in him for ever. It teaches the *superhumanity of its Founder*. How came it that this son of



a humble mechanic, living in the obscurest part of Judea himself, destitute of worldly wealth and power, the object of universal obloquy and scorn, who lived in poverty and died as a malefactor, could start a system like this—a system which, although opposed by the infidelity of the mightiest intellects, the deep-rooted prejudices of ages, and the dark and overwhelming current of the world's depravity, has not only lived and pursued its march amidst the sweep of centuries, the wreck of thrones, and the anarchy of nations, but has been adding victory to victory, until now it has got "the many crowns" of the world upon its brow? Here is a problem to which I earnestly invite the attention of every sceptical mind. The phenomenon is so grand and unique as imperatively to demand the study of every claimant to free and independent thought. To me, I confess, it seems inexplicable, on the assumption that Jesus was nothing more than a man. And it teaches, moreover, *the prospective universality of this system*. Were there no prophecies opening up a bright future for the world, and no promises on which we could rely, the past progress of Christianity would satisfy me that the dominion of the world is before it; for whilst there are no difficulties in its way more formidable than those it has demolished a thousand times over, its devoted allies are more numerous, and its resources and facilities are greater, than ever. Like "the little stone" in the monarch's dream, it grows as it revolves; and, increasing its momentum as it grows, proceeds in an accelerative ratio to swell out its dimensions to fill the earth.

The single-handedness of Christ illustrates—

IV. THE DUTY OF HIS DISCIPLES. Christ treading the winepress alone teaches his disciples the duty of *single-handed* labor. We live in an age of social organization. Christians are everywhere invited to work out their missions through societies. I would not disparage these combinations. I acknowledge that society has power not only to strengthen and encourage the heart of the individual man, but also to

help him to realize objects which otherwise he could never attain ; but I feel, at the same time, that these societies are not an unmixed good, that they are attended with many serious evils as well as advantages, and therefore require to be used with immense caution. They tend to swamp the sense of individual responsibility, to absorb the man in the mass, and thus weaken the principal force for the virtuous and vigorous development of individual thought, feeling, and character. They impress men more with the idea of *partnership* than *personality* in the great concerns of duty. To wish all men to work *with* us in duty, is natural ; to ask them to work *for* us, is sin. We want more *individualism*, in the highest sense, in our religion ;—we want to see more of the earnest thought, the strong conviction, the generous desire, the spontaneous heart of the individual ME, and less of the machinery and feats of “our church,” and of “our society.” We want to see men press along the path of duty, stimulated by their own impulses, free and elastic, but earnest and resolute, rather than driven in the stiff harness of societies.

The case of Christ before us suggests various lessons on this subject. It teaches *that numbers do not determine the question of duty*. Christ’s duty was manifest though “the people were not with him.” Moral obligation is something independent both of the concurrence and antagonism of mankind. Public opinion is no infallible guide. Whilst it has seldom been right, it has often sanctioned the greatest enormities. It crucified the Lord of life and glory. Hence, man should ever cultivate that individualism which would prepare him to follow out his conviction not only *without* the co-operation of any, but *against* the opposition of all, if need be. It teaches *that numbers do not determine the importance of a duty*. Christ’s duty was the most important though the people were not with him. The history of the world shows that the millions have seldom sympathized with the greatest questions ; that the man who has the broadest views, and the strongest convictions, and the noblest aims, is seldom popular. But few will give him their sympathy, while the many will

look on him with cold suspicion. If he endeavor to work out the plan of duty which his great soul has sketched, he must expect to toil single-handed, and, like his Master, tread the winepress alone. His age, not understanding him, suspects him, and therefore will not aid. He must look above for help, and on to posterity to value his principles, and to appreciate his aims. It teaches, moreover, *that numbers do not determine the success of a duty*. Christ succeeded though the people were not with him. In physical conflict, we may very properly calculate the possibility of the issue from the number of the enemy, but not so in moral engagement. The question is not how many are for us, and how many are against us, but how much *right principle* is on *our side*. Systems and thrones and nations must fall before the right as Dagon before the ark of old.

My friend, art thou a mere conventional Christian—one that can do nothing without sympathy, acting more as a mere limb of churches and societies than a free child of God? If so, I call on thee to awake to a sense of thine individual manhood, and tread the winepress of duty alone. Poise thyself erectly, look up, and walk on in the consciousness of thy *undividable essence*. Do not lean on any arm: in thy duty play the agent, not the machine; be a fountain, not a channel; act not *from* others, but ever *from* thyself. Be the man! Remember that, apart from others, and from the universe, thou art a *responsible* existent, and standest alone before God, having momentous functions to perform, which no arm but thine can fulfil. Whatever thou doest, learn to do it thyself; and, however little, it will be something.

“The smallest effort is not lost;  
Each wavelet on the ocean tost  
Aids in the ebb-tide or the flow;  
Each rain-drop makes some flow’ret blow,  
Each struggle lessens human woe.”

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Twenty-sixth.

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof,” &c.—Psa. cxxxvii. 1—6.

SUBJECT :—*Harps on the Willows ; or, Tears of Memory.*

WE agree with Hengstenberg in regarding this psalm as being composed not while the Jews were in Babylon, but after their liberation and return to their own land. The expressions, “we sat, we wept, we remembered,” clearly indicate that it is an historic sketch of their spiritual emotions when exiles in a strange land. It is not a record of what they were experiencing when this was written, but a record of what they had experienced some time before, when—deprived of their homes, their temples, their country, their liberty—they sat down on the banks of some Babylonian river, and, remembering their loss, hung their harps upon the willows, and mingled their tears in the bosom of the rolling stream. The spirit of poetry hangs over this scene, and appeals strongly to our imagination ; but as our aim is to profit rather than to please, we shall bridle our fancy by attention to some of the graver considerations which it suggests. Our subject is the *sorrows of memory*. “We wept when we remembered Zion.”

I. *Their sorrows had reference to the loss of the highest blessing.* As their memory went back over the past, what losses they would discover ! They had lost a beautiful country, whose pastoral meads and waving cornfields, and luxuriant vineyards, and everlasting mountains, and majestic trees, were the envy of nations, the sources from which their favorite poets drew their imagery, and which stood in connexion with many a sacred legend, of which their fathers had

often spoken to them in childhood. They had lost their liberty. They were no longer free citizens in that land where David once reigned in wisdom and in power, but they were captives pining away in thralldom under the foreign yoke of a Pagan despot, in a foreign land. In looking back, moreover, they would find that they had lost many of those who make "life's dearest hours more dear"—*friends*; and many whom they once pressed to their heart would now flit in shadowy forms before the eye of memory, only to impress them with their loss. But neither nor all of these constituted what they felt to be their greatest loss. Amongst all their losses, the loss of ZION appeared so great as to keep in the background all else? But what gave Zion its value? Not the magnificence of its architecture, nor the splendor of its ritual, but *its connexion with their spiritual nature*. Zion was the scene of religious worship and Divine manifestation; and there influences worked, suited to quicken, gratify, and develop the mind and heart. Zion was the representative of that spiritual power which ministered to their spiritual desires and wants. Of all things in this world, nothing is so valuable to man as that which is suited to minister to this the highest good of the soul. In sooth, every other thing is valuable only so far as it does this, and no farther. Property, friends, knowledge, are only valuable as they tend to this; and nothing is a real loss to man that has not the power to benefit him as a spiritual being. The Zion of life, or the spiritual power to improve our souls, wherever found—in books or in friends, in private chambers or in public sanctuaries, in holy nature or in the redeeming Bible—is the transcendently valuable part of life. We might well weep when we lose this Zion.

II. *Their sorrow was deliberate and all-absorbing.* There is a sorrow which oftentimes seizes the mind without deliberation: it comes as a sudden and transient rush of painful feeling. It is not produced by thought, but for the want of it. Thought can argue it out. But the sorrow of the

Jews in Babylon was the *result* of thought. "We sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." Perhaps, by the law of resemblance, the river suggested Jordan, and Jordan brought up reminiscences about Judea and the temple; and as they thought of lost opportunities, their hearts became surcharged with sorrow. Some are in sorrow for the want of thought, but far more would be in sorrow were they to think. It only requires the millions of the frivolous and the gay to sit down calmly and deliberately, to think, in order to open the floodgate of saddening emotion. Their sorrows, too, were *all-absorbing*. (1) *They could do nothing else*. Those harps, with which they had often wiled away many a saddening thought, soothed many an anxious heart, and thrilled many a breast with the ecstasy of sweet sound, they could not use; they hung them up. They could do nothing but remember and weep, and weep as they remembered. What a state for man to be reduced to!—to be unfitted for everything but weeping: all energies engulfed in the dark whirlpool of sorrow. (2) *They would do nothing else*. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Jerusalem was never so dear to them as now. They never forgot it. In their daily prayers, they opened their windows, and looked in the direction where it lay. Men are often taught the value of blessings by their loss; they learn their worth by their want. Health is valued in sickness, peace in tumult, friendship in bereavement, Christianity in hell.

Let us now briefly notice a few more general practical truths which this subject presents to our notice; and—

First. *This subject presents us with a view of our nature, most important to contemplate*. Whatever may be the philosophic definitions and theories of memory, all have proof, too obvious and experimental, of a power which connects man, by indissoluble bonds, with the past, to question its existence—a power which gathers up all the fragments of our conscious existence so that nothing is lost—a power which photographs'



in imperishable forms, upon the soul the image of everything that we have ever seen, felt, or acted. It is the *gallery* where hang the pictures of all the scenes through which we have passed, the landscapes we have admired, and all the persons whom we have ever known or loved—the *archives* wherein are laid the records of all the events and actions of our lives—the *monitor* which is ever inculcating on our hearts the solemn lessons of experience—the *casket* containing the choicest treasures, the counsels of the wise, the sweet words of friendship, and the dear reminiscences of a mother's and a father's love.

“What wealth, in memory's firm record,  
Which, should it perish, could this world *recol*,  
In colours fresh—*originally* bright—  
From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years.”—*Young*.

This has scarcely the exaggeration of poetry : it expresses nothing but the sober truth. All that the world has ever been to us is in our memory. It is only in a figurative sense that we are said to leave the world in death. The fact is, we carry the world with us. As the bodily eye closes on it, the eye of memory opens, and views it in forms more real and impressive.

Secondly. *This subject presents us with a view of retribution opposed to modern scepticism.* There are not a few writers, some of them distinguished by superior talent and genius, who sneer at the doctrine of a future retribution. They would have it that an adequate retribution goes on in every man's life while here—that he sins and suffers, and thus pays his moral debt as he advances, so that there are no arrears for him to account for in the future. It is to be feared that the influence of these writers is doing much to weaken the hold of this doctrine upon the general mind. Apart from the Bible, whose testimony with us closes the question, arguments might be adduced from *analogy*, *consciousness*, and *memory*, sufficient to show the utter groundlessness of their assumption. Indeed, we think that the fact of men—as in the text—suffer-

ing from the recollection of things long past, is in itself a complete refutation. Do men suffer from memory? Does the recollection of blessings long since lost, and sins long since committed, fill the mind with sorrow? Is not the affirmative to this attested by every man's experience? and, if so, where is the truth of the statement, that adequate retribution follows immediately after the commission of the sin? The very action of memory here proves that, in the case of the wicked, there is a "treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath."

Thirdly. *This subject presents us with a view of life truly solemnizing.* We do not, like the brute, finish with life as we go on; we have to revisit the past and relieve our lives. We do not finish with our day when the clock strikes twelve. That day is sure to become more real to us in time to come. Memory will recur to its fleeting hours as sources of events and fountains of influence. We must confront our yesterdays, look them in the face, and study them in a light that will wax more strong and revealing as we advance through the ages before us. And ever is this sphere of memory widening. It increases in size and momentous as we proceed. How vast has it become already! It seems to stretch out behind me as some awful thing. It echoes my past words; it bears the print of my every footstep; it mirrors me as I appeared in each successive hour of my conscious life. How solemn is this! How unseemly and how foolish does the conduct of the frivolous and the gay, the indolent loungeur and the thoughtless worldling, appear in the light of this wonderful fact in our nature!

Fourthly. *This subject presents us with a view of futurity which must reverse present calculations.* Good men have ever been disposed to mark, with considerable solicitude, the secular prosperity of the wicked, and the poverty of the pious; but this doctrine of memory is quite sufficient to show that the present advantage of the wicked is only seeming and transient. To the eye of memory, things appear very different to what they do to the eye of

sense. There stands before you a man of wealth, but of no religion. All the sources of worldly pleasure are at his command. No anxious thought disturbs his bosom; he is full of hilarity and mirth. There stands another in the depths of poverty; but, with the true spirit of a Christian, he toils hard, yet fails to procure sufficient fare. The condition of these two men will soon be in the past, and each will be looking at his present circumstances with the eye of memory, and the views and emotions will be reversed. Whilst the former, in his review, instead of discovering aught in his secular superiority to gratify, will—in consequence of its connexion with sin—find much to cover him with shame, and fill him with distress; the latter, on the other hand, in looking back, will find much, even in the depths of his present indigence, to inspire him with happiness, because of the virtues with which it stands connected, and serves to develop. This faculty of memory will reverse one day all our conventional ideas of happiness: it will turn the very pleasures of the wicked into misery, and the very sorrows of the pious into joy. As it looks furiously up from the nether scenes to earth's opulence, it will convert the wealth of Dives into fiery anguish; and, as it looks calmly down from the upper realms to earth's indigence, it will transmute the poverty of Lazarus into ecstatic joy.

Fifthly. *This subject presents us with a view of our need of Christianity.* The nature of memory requires that we should have two things before, as sinners, we can be happy; an assurance that our past sins are forgiven, and a power to help us to live virtuously in the future. As we must survey the past, the remembrance of our imperfection and sins will ever fill us with unutterable apprehensions of the future, unless we can be assured that they are forgiven; and, as what is now in future will be soon in the past, it is necessary that we should be enabled to cultivate such a life as we can look back upon with a holy satisfaction. These two things Christianity does for us: it grants us a "remission for the sins that are past," and grace to walk in a "newness of life" through the

future. Accept, then, the religion of Jesus, that you may look the past in the face with a holy calmness, knowing that all its iniquities are forgiven; and that you may also so walk in the future as to make those mighty districts of being—which, from age to age, you will go on adding to the past—sunny scenes of spiritual goodness, which memory will ever delight to visit; and thus enjoy

“The rich relics of well-spent hours.”

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### Analysis of Homily the Twenty-seventh.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”—Heb. ix. 11, 12.

THE *object* of worship has ever been the same, but the *mode* of worship has undergone two great changes:—First, from *no* sacrifice to *many* sacrifices. At the beginning, man approached his Maker on the ground of his own personal innocence. He required neither sacrifice nor priest. But he fell, and a regular system of sacrifices were appointed, through which he could alone draw near to his Creator. The second change was, from *many* sacrifices to one—from the many mediations of Moses to the *one* mediation of Christ.

SUBJECT:—*The Superiority of Christ's Priesthood.*

I. Christ introduced higher things. “Good things to come.” What are those good things? (1) *A higher system of teaching.* Its teaching is more spiritual, clear, and diffusive, than that of Judaism. (2) *A higher form of worship.* Its worship is more simple, personal, attractive, and free, than that of Judaism. (3) *A higher state of society.* Its society is marked by broader views, higher aims, and more expansive benevolence, than that of Judaism.

II. Christ officiates in a higher sanctuary. "More perfect tabernacle." (1) *Heaven is a more extensive sanctuary.* "Greater." It is for all kindreds, &c. (2) Heaven is a more divine sanctuary. "Not made with hands," &c. In this sanctuary Christ officiates as a priest. What is he doing? Not informing, or persuading, or influencing, the Almighty, but attracting and encouraging sinners.

III. Christ presented a higher sacrifice. "Neither by the blood of goats," &c., but by his own blood. Life is the most precious thing in the universe. Some lives more precious than others: the animal than the vegetable—the spiritual than the animal. Christ's is the most precious of all. This he offered.

IV. Christ accomplished a higher work. He "obtained eternal redemption for us," a redemption of forfeited rights and paralyzed powers, a redemption from the guilt and spiritual influence of sin, and an impartation of pardon and purity to the condemned and corrupt; and all this *eternal*. Blessed thought! The dark cloud of sin that rolled between the soul and God—obstructing the rays of heavenly love, chilling the vital air, darkening the path of life, and waking dreadful apprehensions of a coming storm, dispersed for ever, leaving the moral firmament to radiate resplendently with the truth and love of God. The intellect freed from the enthralling influence of prejudice; the conscience from the tyranny of unholy lusts; the will from the despotism of depraved principles and sinful habits; the soul shall exult in everlasting freedom: and, like some imperial bird that has just burst its cage, feeling the inspiration of restored liberty, it shall open its eyes on the boundless blue, spread its plumage beneath the sun, and soar from height to height, and still for ever soar, rejoicing in the "liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free."

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### Analysis of *Homil the Twenty-eighth.*

"No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."—Rev. xiv. 3.

THERE are two glorious facts contained in the context:—  
First. That there are members of our common race in heaven. They were once in the sins and sorrows of our world, but there they are now with the "Lamb," the "elders," and the "living ones," in the midst of music and splendor. To the Bible we are exclusively indebted for the knowledge of the fact. Secondly. That all these members of our race passed to heaven through the same necessary process. "They were redeemed from among men." One process.

### SUBJECT:—*Man Training for Heaven.*

I. Heaven requires his training. "No man could LEARN the song." Man cannot blend in the happy harmony of the celestial state without previous training. *Analogy* would suggest this. In the *physical* system, every being is fitted to his position: his organism is suited to his locality. These bodies of ours, as now constituted, could live in no other planet than this. In the *social* system the same principle of fitness is required. The stolid clown could not occupy the professor's chair; nor could he who is reckless concerning law, right, and order, occupy the bench of justice. It is just so in relation to heaven. To feel at home in the society of the holy, cheerfully to serve the Creator and his universe, and to be in harmony with all the laws, operations, and beings, in the holy empire, we must manifestly be invested with the same character. But what is the training necessary? (1) Not *mechanical*. Ceremonial religions enjoin this. (2) Not *intellectual*. Theological necessary, but not sufficient. It is *MORAL*—the training of the spiritual sympathies; *the heart being brought to say, Thy will be done*. No one "can sing the song"—blend in the harmonious action of heaven—without this. A man with corrupt sympathies could never *sing* in



heaven; he would *shriek*. In the midst of happy myriads, he would be isolated and alone. His darkness would cloud from him the outward sun; his inner commotions would turn for him the outward music into thunder; his inner flashes of guilt would change, for him, the God of love into "a consuming fire."

II. Redemption is the condition of his training. "Those who were redeemed from the earth." The redemption here referred to is evidently that procured by the system of Christ. (Rev. v. 9.) The training requires something more than *education*: it needs *emancipation*—the delivering of the soul from certain feelings and forces incompatible with holiness—a deliverance from the *guilt* and *power* of *evil*. The grand characteristic of Christianity is, that it is a power "to redeem from all evil." No other system on earth can do this.

III. That earth is the scene of his training. "Redeemed from the *earth*." The brightest fact in the history of the dark world is, that it is a redemptive scene. Amidst all the clouds and storms of depravity and sorrow that sweep over our path, this fact rises up before us as a bright orb that shall one day dispel all gloom and hush all tumult. Thank God, this is not a *retributive*, but a *redemptive*, scene. But it should be remembered that it is not only a redemptive scene, but the *only* redemptive scene. There is no redemptive influence in heaven, it is not required; nor in hell—there it is needed, but never comes.

Wonderful world is this! True, it is but a spark amidst the lights of the universe—a tiny leaf in the mighty forests! Let the light be quenched, and the leaf destroyed, its absence would not be felt. Still it has a *moral* history the most momentous. Here Christ lived—labored—died; here millions of spirits are trained for heaven. What Marathon was to Greece, and Waterloo is to Europe, this little earth is to the creation. Here the great battles of the spiritual universe were fought.

# The Genius of the Gospel.

(Continued from page 164.)

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[ABLE expositions of the gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities alluded to by the inspired writers; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are happily not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its *widest* truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at this work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographic, or philological remark, would be to miss our aim, which is not to make bare the mechanical process of scriptural study, but to reveal its spiritual results.]

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## FIFTH SECTION.—Matt. xiii. 17.

### *The Baptism of Christ; or, a Divine Inauguration to the Mission of Life.*

IF we looked upon this wonderful narrative with the mere eye of criticism and speculation, there are five points which we would raise and canvass:—First. Was there any acquaintance between John and Christ prior to the baptism, or did the Baptist's knowledge of the Messiah now begin on the banks of the Jordan? Secondly. What object could the baptism of Christ have answered?—being, as we take it, a mere symbol of the *necessity of cleansing*, and he being perfectly immaculate—what was its precise intent? Thirdly. Were the extraordinary phenomena, such as the appearance of the “dove,” the opening of the heavens, and the articulate voice, things which came within the range of physical vision, or were they objects of entire spiritual perception? Did they occur without or within?—were they *objective* or *subjective*? Fourthly. What was the mode of Christ-life up to this period? He was now thirty years of age. Only once before he has appeared before us since his infancy. How has he lived, and what has been his occupation, during this long period? I confess to a strong curiosity on this point. Would that some hand could draw the curtain which veils this interesting portion of his history, that we might see him passing on, from

stage to stage, to the maturity which he now develops! Fifthly. What was the particular mode of Christ's baptism? Was it sprinkling or dipping? Was water applied to him, or he to the water? To some, the attraction and sublimity of this wonderful event in our Lord's history is found in the expression—"Went up straightway out of the water." This to them is the *text* of the passage: there is a talismanic power in it to kindle inspiration, produce impassioned sermons, and create learned books. Though we have an opinion on this subject, it gives us no enthusiasm. We are not over anxious either to sustain or state it. The prepositions "into," "from," "out of," &c., interpret them as you may in relation to baptism—bring out of them submersion, sprinkling, pouring, or any other conceivable *mode* of putting man's body in connexion with water—and what, after all, have you got? Show us, as the result of your labor, the great *moral* truth suited to touch the spiritual consciousness of humanity—to convert the sinner or sanctify the saint, and we will honor you for your critical toil and baptismal zeal; but, until then, you must excuse us if we feel no great interest in your intellectual evolutions. So long as there are vast fields, and even continents, of spiritual truth yet unexplored, we shall not waste our energy in digging on such little stony spots, that have vegetated little else than a miserable sectarianism.

Such are some of the critical and speculative questions which this interesting event suggests, and which our purpose will only allow us thus briefly to mention.\*

After thirty years of life, somewhere and somehow, amidst the solitudes of Nazareth, Jesus now appears in public for the first time. It is a momentous crisis in his history. He is to enter on new scenes; he is to engage in new services. Stupendous issues depend upon that mission, into which he is now publicly inaugurated by that baptism, which he receives at the hand of John. Now, although the mission of

\* For a discussion of them, see Neander's "Life of Christ," "Olshausen on the Gospel," and an able article in the "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature" on "the Baptism of Jesus by John."

Jesus was *sui generis*, every man has as truly a mission as he had. No one is here by accident: there is a meaning and a message in the life of each; and there is not one possessing a rational nature who has not some portion of divine work, which he is both fitted and required to do. Upon the right fulfilment of our individual missions depend our own true greatness and well-being, as well as our utility to the universe, and our acceptance with God. Now, there are two things which Christ had at his inauguration, as here recorded, which every man must have if he would rightly “fulfil his course”—*a self-renunciation to the spirit of duty, and a special connexion with the Spirit of God.*

I. *A self-renunciation to the spirit of duty.* When Jesus made application for baptism, John, conscious of his personal inferiority, modestly “forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” To this, Jesus replied, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;” as if he had said, Baptism is a divine institution; and although it is a ritual enactment, and not a moral principle, as it is not yet abrogated, and as I am “made under the law,” it is binding on me. Whatever is duty, positive or moral—however apparently trivial or momentous—I shall obey. “It becometh us to fulfil ALL righteousness.” This is the spirit with which our great Master here begins his public life. But what, in truth, is this spirit of duty? It is not a *calculating prudence*, that which concerns itself with “gains and losses,” which attends to precepts for the sake of promises, and struggles for holiness for the sake of heaven; but a sympathy with the *right*, so all-absorbing as to exclude all solicitude about results. It is not a *blind impulse*—that which is evoked by appeals which reason has never searched, and often stimulates to deeds which the calm judgment does not approve—a state of mind resembling the foaming billow in the tempest, raised for a moment by a foreign force above the level of its own nature, and which soon falls flat and tame again—but such an *enlightened*

affection for God as draws, in calm, constant, and concurrent flow, the whole soul after him. It is not a *timid servility* urging men to work in religion with a trembling nerve and a quailing heart, as slaves under the lash and glare of a tyrant, but such a filial attachment as makes obedience to the will of God esteemed as the "meat and drink" of the soul. It is not a *fettering constraint*, in which one is impelled to a course by certain considerations which he dares not oppose, but does not cordially approve—a coercion of some of the powers without the free acquiescence of others—but a vital inspiration bringing out every power of the soul in a freedom joyous and elastic, like unto the "glorious liberty of the sons of God."

This is the spirit of duty—the spirit that now penetrated Christ in entering on his public mission; and which was the inspiration of his life, and the soul of his history. And, my friend, wouldst thou be initiated into the grand business and blessedness of being? Wouldst thou start rightly on the course of an interminable existence? Wouldst thou be divinely inaugurated into the high offices of God's spiritual universe? If so, thou must have that spirit which Jesus now expressed to John on the banks of the Jordan, when he said, "IT BECOMETH US TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The other thing which Jesus had on commencing his public mission—as developed in this narrative, and which is indispensable to all who would answer the grand purpose of life—was—

II. *A special connexion with the Spirit of God.* There are three things in this wonderful scene which indicated Christ's special connexion with God at this time:—First, the *vision* of the opening heavens. "Lo! the heavens were opened unto him." An impressive expression this of the fact mankind have ever overlooked—namely, that behind the veil of matter there is a spiritual universe, which is deeply interested in the doings and destinies of a holy man. How would this vision strengthen the heart of Christ for the stupendous mission he had undertaken! He would feel, as his trials multiplied, and

the nation grew in wrath against him, that up those heavens—where the vulgar could discern nothing but the quiet seas of blue, the swimming clouds, and the twinkling lights of night—there were spirits bent in earnest affection for him, and ready at any moment to throw open their glorious pavilion, and welcome him to their home. Secondly. The *visit* of the holy dove. In the symbolization of the Bible, certain animals—such as the lamb, the lion, the eagle, the bull—are frequently employed as the representatives of character. In this hieroglyphical system the dove is the emblem of purity; and its descending and abiding upon Christ now, indicated that he was the temple of the spirit of holiness. This Spirit with Christ was not a transient visitant, as in the case of Saul, Sampson, and others, but a permanent resident. The “dove abode” on Christ. Thirdly. The *voice* of the everlasting Father. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” This approving voice was the greatest blessing of all.

Now, all these things, indicating a special connexion with God, are as necessary for every man who would happily realize the great purpose of being, as they were for Christ. Yes; every man must have this divine *vision*, *visitant*, and *voice*. *The heavens must open*; the thick veil of matter must be drawn aside; the sensuous firmament of the soul must be rent asunder, and a deep and imperishable impression of a spiritual universe must be made upon the heart, and the whole man must be brought under the powers of the world to come. *The heavenly dove* must descend as the spirit of *purity*, not to pay a transient visit and wing its way again, but as a permanent resident, consecrating the entire nature as its everlasting temple; and the *approving voice* of Heaven must verberate in the depths of conscience, that we may go forth, not with “doubts and fears,” but with a cheerful spirit and acourageous heart. “Oh! that thou wouldst read the heavens”—unveil to us the spiritual world; “that thou wouldst come down”—descend on us as the permanent visitant of purity, and as a *voice*, bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God!



# A HOMILY

ON

## The Divinity of the Inner and Outer Life of the Good.\*

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“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”—Rom. xiv. 7—9.

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If you intelligently survey the context, you will discover several general truths of considerable interest and moment in practical Christianity. We shall specify a few as introductory to our subject.

*That there is a variety of grades in Christian attainment.* In the first verse of this chapter, mention is made of the “weak in faith;” and in the first verse of the following chapter, we read of the “weak” and the “strong.” It is the characteristic of all Christians that they strive to reach the lofty and perfect ideal of excellence embodied in the life of Jesus; but their degrees of approximation are very varied. Jesus himself recognised and announced this truth. He spoke of “the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear.” Amongst the “trees of the Lord,” there is the tender plant that quivers and shrinks at the softest breeze, and there rises in majesty the sturdy tree, that defies every storm, and bends only to the force of its own rich foliage and fruit. The path of practical Christianity is trodden by persons of every degree in moral stature and strength—“babes, young men, and fathers in Christ,” are on this spiritual course. Here falters

\* This homily has already appeared in another form. It has been long out of print, and is now re-published by the repeated requests of many friends.

the child that has just taken the first step in the path of goodness. Descrying the difficulties that lie before him, he moves with a timid and trembling step; and here, too, is the man who has passed through its greatest intricacies, and climbed its steepest heights. He is braced with energy—he is buoyant with hope: vigorously, firmly, and erectly, he pursues his way, exulting in the prospect of soon reaching his home. The causes of this diversity of attainment are numerous. Difference in mental temperament, in intellectual capacity, in methods of education, in the period of adopting Christianity, in the means of improvement, and the manner of employing them, are amongst the causes which operate in the production of this vast variety of Christian character.

*That those in the lowest grades of Christian attainment have generally displayed an undue attachment to religious ritualism.* “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is *weak*, eateth herbs.” The Church in Rome, at this period, was composed of two classes—converts from Judaism and converts from Paganism. The former retained much of their attachment to the ceremonial code of Moses—a code which, amongst other things, prohibited the eating of meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols, and enjoined a sacred observance of certain days. The converted Pagan in the Church would, from the nature of his education, have no respect for such enactments; whilst the converted Jew, for the same reason, would esteem them of solemn moment. Now, the apostle intimates that this was moral weakness in the Jew; that, had he a stronger faith, he would not have felt so strongly on such points of *mere ceremony*. May it not be enunciated as a general principle, that, in proportion to the feebleness of Christianity—as it exists either in individuals or communities—will be the strength of the disposition to attach importance to mere externalisms? Was it not, as the spirit of Christianity began to wane in the first ages, that man commenced building up that huge and pompous system of ritualism, which has ever proved the greatest obstacle to the progress of truth, and the greatest bane to the spiritual

interests of humanity? And, from the dawn of the Reformation to this hour, has it not always appeared that, in every revival of Christianity, there has been a check to formalism? and that, amongst whatever class of religious men it has manifested itself with the greatest life and vigor, there has always been displayed the greatest indifference to ceremonial observances? "Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." The first and weakest stage of religion is the "natural." It lives—such a life as it has—amidst materialism. It learns by pictures—it feels by music—it worships by form—"it walks by sight." "Afterwards," that which is spiritual: and when that which is spiritual comes, the natural, the material, the ceremonial, vanishes. Henceforth religious *locality* is nothing. "This mountain" and "that mountain" are alike. Its temple is within—altar, priest, sacrifice, and God, are there. Religious *form* is nothing. Spirit and truth are its life, and it flows free and formless as the air. Religious *seasons* are nothing. "It prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks." Even the blessed and lovely *form* of Jesus is nothing. Though it once knew him after the flesh, it knows him so no more. His sublime principles, his holy character, his spirit of free and universal love—in these it lives, breathes, labors, and finds its heaven.

*That the lowest grades, who act in conformity with their sincere conviction, demand the generous respect of all.* "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not." The man who acts from carnal dictates, from corrupt impulses, from old custom, from unreasoning caprice, has no claim to my respect. He acts beneath the dignity of his nature, and contrary to the intentions and will of his Maker. But the man who acts from *conviction* demands my reverence; yes, even though his convictions be founded in error. He has used his own mental faculties, he has examined evidence for himself, he has felt the force of his own conclusion, and he faithfully embodies his conviction in his life. Is such a man

to be despised, reproached, persecuted, denounced as a heretic? "No," says Paul; "such a man is not even to be judged." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Yes, who art thou? Hast thou special illumination? Hast thou the absolute gospel, or is thy gospel but a mere class of notions? Has heaven made thee the arbiter of human thought? Thou art, it may be, a scholar, a philosopher, a saint; perhaps all combined; still thou art a fallible mortal, and thou hast neither the qualification nor authority to sit in judgment upon thy brother's convictions. I cannot forbear asking, Who are the men who have ever been the most ready to arrogate to themselves this power?—the most ready to arraign and punish their brethren for heterodoxy? Have they been distinguished either by great spirituality of soul, liberality of thought, or a philosophic insight to the laws of mind, the doctrines of the gospel, and the principles of God's administration? No; they have been men whose conceptions have been narrow, superficial, and material—men whose gospel has been a *little bundle of crude notions*, attractive to the thoughtless, but, verily, repulsive to all higher minds. What, then, have we to do with our brother, whose convictions we may suppose to be wrong? Do with him! Treat him with fraternal respect—seek to correct him by fair and affectionate argument and a holy life. Wise, just, and beautiful, is the apostolic advice. Had it always been acted upon, acrimony in religious controversy, schisms in the body of Christ, martyrdom in the annals of the Church—these hideous blots would never have appeared on the page of human history.

*That the grand characteristic common to every grade, in Christian attainment, is devotedness to the Lord.* "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Whatever may be the different convictions which Christians have on certain subjects, the grand

object of each and all is to do all to God. *This is the distinguishing feature of the Christian character.* He who makes not the will of the Lord his rule of conduct, and the glory of the Lord his aim, belongs to Christians of *no grade* whatever. The text is but an amplification of this idea. Everything, in practical Christianity, has reference to the Lord. The Lord is the spring, centre, and circumference, of the good man's movements—the very soul of his history. The sentiment of the text is, the *divinity of the Christian's history*. There are two facts in this passage which will develop and illustrate this beautiful idea:—

I. CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF HIS INNER LIFE. “We live unto the Lord.” Whatever power leads captive our spiritual faculties, and controls the soul, is the true sovereign. The political Cæsars, however magnificent their court, vast their territory, and numerous their subjects, are but impotent pretenders compared with this. The SUPREME LOVE is ever this power. It is the unseen, but veritable, monarch enthroned upon the heart. All within bow to its sceptre. It is the spring of all his actions, and the hidden source of all his influence. Were there but *one* supreme love amongst men, there would be but one lord on the earth, and all men would be united at heart. But there are many and diverse, such as wealth, pleasure, power, religion; and hence the many spiritual principalities and powers that are ever working and warring in society. They who love Christ, crown him as the monarch of their soul, and their loving sentiment is, “None of us liveth unto himself.” The text suggests two things in relation to this inner sovereignty of Christ:—

1. *That it is a principle of rule which stands opposed to all personal aims.* “None of us liveth unto himself.” There is a sense in which no man *can* live unto himself. Man is not a detached, insulated unit in the universe—he is a part of a great whole—he is a link in the vast chain of being. His movements may propagate an influence to its extremity; he cannot move without influencing others. His very breathings

may produce ripples upon the mighty lake of existence, which will spread, in ever-widening circles, to the very shores of eternity. There are mystic strings connecting him with the universe. Can he move without touching them? Can he give a touch that will not send its vibrations along the arches of the boundless future? The effects of a man's influence, either for good or evil, will be determined by his moral character. A bad man is a moral curse: the influence that streams from him will be moral poison. A good man, under God, is a blessing: his influence, like the living waters, will irrigate and beautify the mental districts through which they flow. Who can think of this doctrine of *necessary* human influence, without having his spirits overspread with the most solemn sentiments? Yet, would I complain at this wonderful fact in my nature? Would I have a life in which I could neither be the subject nor source of influence? No; I feel that this fact, though awfully solemn, gives grandeur to my being. It qualifies me to participate in universal love—to enter into the sorrows and joys and hearts of others; to exult in sentiments that inspire the spirits of the great and the good, and to contribute, in my humble measure, to the great aggregate of goodness whatever of holy thought I can originate, of pure sentiment I can cultivate, and of benevolent effort I can perform.

But whilst it is a solemn truth that no man can live unto himself, it is not *the* truth that the apostle here teaches. Some have given it this interpretation. It is a manifest perversion of his holy thought. What he means is, that none of us—Christians—live to ourselves—live to self as a voluntary and supreme end. Whilst it is the glory of man's nature that he *cannot* live unto himself, it is the depravity of his character that he *will* strive to do so. The interests of others—of the universe itself—are nothing to him in comparison with his own. He would be ever receptive, never communicative. He would receive all, give nothing, unless it be with the hope of his contribution flowing back in some form or other, with interest, to his own coffers. He would monopolize universal



goodness. The laborer may sweat out his life, the shopman wear away his health, the mariner hazard his existence, the warrior dye continents in blood, and tread empires in the dust, his selfish heart would exult in all, if the smallest benefit would accrue to him therefrom. Is there a crime on the black scroll of human depravity that may not be traced to this source? The mighty flood of evil that for six thousand years has been surging its turbid and foaming billows through the heart of groaning humanity, has its fountain down in the selfish soul. Selfishness is the head of all wicked "principalities and powers."

Now, the apostle intimates that to "live unto the Lord" is to pursue a course the very opposite of this: it is to live under the presiding power of those universal principles of love which the Lord exemplified in his life, inculcated in his teaching, and brought out in impressive majesty by his death. *It is to live as he lived.* Did he live unto himself? Did he aim at personal ends? No. He sought not his own will; "he pleased not himself." He seemed to lose the very sense of self in the great idea of the world's salvation. He was the incarnation of disinterested love. Every man of the age in which he lived, acted as every man of every preceding age had done—for himself. Each sought his own; and there were then, as now, as many conflicting interests as there were men. But he lived for others—lived for all. He unfurled the standard of a *new interest*—an interest which embraced the well-being of humanity. To rally round this standard of universal love—to have the soul wrought into sympathy with the mind of Jesus; feeling his love for moral truth and a fallen world as its mightiest impulse—is "to live unto the Lord." Thus lived the apostle. "For me," said he, "to live is Christ." His own life to him was nothing in comparison with the end he sought; and hence, when persecution and death, in their most terrific forms, confronted him, he exclaimed, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course

with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

2. *That it is a principle of rule held supreme amidst all the variations of life.* "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." This expression suggests to us the wonderful vicissitudes of human history. "We live." "We die." It is not long since we commenced life: not long since we first breathed this air, opened our eyes on this lovely universe, woke up to a consciousness of our spiritual being and relations, and began weaving those mystic ties of association which bind us so firmly to this little world. "We die." Does the apostle mean to imply by this expression that death is the antithesis of life? We know that *to die* is to have this organization broken up, these eyes quenched in midnight, these limbs paralyzed—to move no more. *To die*, is to be removed from our families, our occupations, our associations, our varied scenes of worldly and material pleasure. *To die*, is to leave this stage of being, with its mixture of moral elements, its disciplinary dispensations and remedial measures, and to return no more. But is this all? Are these the most solemn aspects of human death? No; they are found not in the quenching of animal life, but in the production of conscious immortality; not in the dissolution of earthly ties, but in the formation of everlasting alliances; not in the exit from this probationary stage, but in the introduction to the tremendous retributions of eternity. We must not place death, then, in contrast with life, but rather regard it as the most solemn event in connexion with the living history of man. Death is but one change in the mighty series of changes that make up human history. Now, the Christian holds the principle of Divine rule within him supreme amidst all these changes, even in the greatest change—*death itself*. "Not my will, but thine, be done." This is the presiding sentiment of his soul. This he breathes in every stage he reaches—in every transition he feels. Perhaps the variations in the Christian's history here are but the types of changes, of which

he will be the subject for ever. Eternity is not a scene of monotony. Progress implies change. Mutation must ever be a law of creatures, however exalted. *Death* here, to the good man, is but an out-birth to a higher life; and may it not be that such out-births will be periodical events in the world to come?—that holy souls will emerge into higher, and still higher, forms of being, for ever? But let there be change in his being, in his sceneries, in his associations, in his engagements, there will never be a change as to those great principles that govern his soul. The same end he will pursue for ever. “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.” This end will engross his heart, engage his faculties, control his activities, and absorb his being in blessedness, without end.

But why pursue this course?—why sink into self-forgetfulness, and yield up our existence so entirely to the influence of another? Does not such a life originate rather in the dictates of a fanatical superstition than in the convictions of an enlightened reason? Let the following facts reply. *It is the only course congenial to our spiritual being.* To live to self is to offer the greatest indignity to that soul, whose relations are infinite, and whose sympathies were intended, not to be pent up by personal interests, but to flow forth like the light, encompassing the world with its genial beams. To live to self is to envelop the spirit with an atmosphere dark, cold, and impregnated with disease, and to generate those elements of *envy, malice, revenge, jealousy, and fear*, which are eternally inimical to the soul’s health and growth, and the sources of mental misery everywhere. Happiness is sometimes defined as consisting in *loving and being loved*. But the selfish man has no generous love within him: he has no heart to love others; and, because of this, others have no heart to love him. *He who does not love cannot be loved.* But, to live unto the Lord; to be ruled by his benevolent spirit; to seek universal goodness, and not personal happiness, as an end; this is the only life congenial to our nature, and favorable to the real interests of souls. The plant never reaches its

perfection but as it yields itself up to the free influence of nature; throws forth its odours on every breeze, and spreads forth its beauties to every eye. Nor can the human soul ever realize a full, perfect, and happy development of its powers, but as it is swayed by universal love, and gives out its properties to the good of the great system to which it belongs. We must go out of self; lose its very sight; be filled with God; in order to fill self with joy.

Still more. *It is the only course agreeable to the universal law of right.* To whom ought we to live? Were we the authors and owners of our existence, there would be something like reason and rectitude in living to self. But we are not our own. "He made us, and not we ourselves." He redeemed us by his blood. We are absolutely and indefinitely the Lord's. To consecrate our all to him, is therefore, our "reasonable service," and our most solemn obligation. He who lives unto himself is misappropriating all the blessings of Providence, and perverting all the powers of his being. He is violating the righteous claims of heaven—claims addressed to him through nature, history, conscience, and the cross.

To these facts add yet another. *It is the only course that will ensure the approbation of God.* If there be a God, must not his approval be of infinite moment to every intelligence? Without it, can there be happiness?—must there not be woe? His smile is the glory of heaven, and his frown is the midnight of hell. Surely, then, to seek his favor is the highest dictate both of wisdom and duty. But who are the men who will ensure his approbation? Why will he pronounce the "well-done" upon those myriads on his right hand, in the last day? Not because they amassed the most wealth, or drank most deeply of the streams of pleasure—not because they graced the circles of fashion, or held high stations in social life. No: nor yet because they penetrated far into the great empire of truth, waxed eminent in knowledge, and trained their minds to think with freedom, precision, and force; but because they were inspired and ruled by the benevolent spirit of Jesus,

when on earth. Here is the reason, as given by the Judge :—  
 “ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

I hold those *facts* as abundant evidence to vindicate the Christian life from all such charges as irrationality and fanaticism, and to show that, of all the lines of conduct that a human intelligence can possibly adopt, none are *more reasonable* and *right*, none so *imperative* and *glorious*, as that of “living unto the Lord.”

II. *Christ is the Sovereign of his outer life.* “ For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” We use the phrase, “inner life,” to designate man’s moral life—all the voluntary workings of his own spirit, thoughts, affections, volitions, and all that enter into the constitution of his moral character. By “outer life,” we mean what he is in connexion with the external universe in which he lives, and upon which both his being and well-being are necessarily dependent ; what he is, under all the outward circumstances that affect him—health or sickness, poverty or prosperity, friendship or bereavement, the disciplines of time or the allotments of eternity—all from *without* that touch his being, whether consonant or contrary to his will. The events connected with these two great departments of being—the inner and outer—make up the whole of human history ; and Christ is the Lord of both to the Christian. Let it not be supposed, however, that he is the Sovereign of both these provinces in the same sense. There is a distinction ever to be observed—*broad, necessary, eternal*. For example—

His sovereignty over the *inner* life is *dependent upon individual choice*, but his sovereignty over the *outer* is not so. Does Jesus *force* his way up to power over the human heart ? Does he, by violence, snatch the sceptre from the hands of the usurper, and, by sheer might, take the inner throne ? No.

This would be to destroy the moralism of human nature—humanity itself. God has given to every man the power to elect his own moral sovereign. The fact is, *nothing can rule the soul that it does not love, and there is no power that can force it to love.* This doctrine is in harmony with universal consciousness, the experience of all Christians, and the general tenor of inspiration. We are commanded to “seek the kingdom of God”—“to receive it;” and Jesus is represented as standing at the door of the heart soliciting admission. This inner sovereignty, then, is by the suffrage of mind. “We are made willing.” But not so with the outer. Christ is sovereign there, whether we will or no. He sits on his throne independent of the volitions of the universe. “He must reign :” to him every knee shall bow. “Our times are in his hand.” We may specify another point of distinction.

His sovereignty over the *inner life is a Christian virtue*, but his sovereignty over the *outer* is not so. To be ruled by the benevolent spirit of Christ—to move in harmony with his mind and life—has ever been felt and acknowledged *praiseworthy*. The moral sense of men invariably bows to such conduct as virtuous; and virtue, by the way, always implies agreement with the laws of personal freedom, and the standard of moral right. But the sovereignty of Christ over our outward circumstances is not to us a virtue. We had no power in raising him to the throne, nor does his continuance there depend on us. No thanks to man that Jesus reigns over the universe. Had his sinful wishes been realized, would he not now have been a prisoner in the grave, instead of a monarch on the throne? Again—

His sovereignty over the *inner life is limited*, but his sovereignty over the *outer* is not so. In every past age, the numbers who have spiritually yielded to his sceptre have been few compared with the teeming masses who would not have him to rule over them; and, to this hour, his willing subjects are a small minority; but his external government stretches over the race, as it exists here, and in eternity. “The dead and the living.” “He is Lord” of man in all places, periods,



and conditions of being—on earth, in heaven, in hell ; and not of man only, but of the vast creation. “His kingdom ruleth over all.”

His sovereignty over the *inner* life is ever a blessing, but over the *outer* it is not so. Free, genial, peaceful, uplifting, and inspiring, is the moral sway of Jesus over the soul. But his external authority is not always a blessing ; it is frequently a tremendous curse. The man who enjoys his *inner* reign, exults beneath his *outward* sceptre, and ever esteems it the highest privilege of his being ; for he knows that Jesus, in the exercise of his power, causes all things to work together for his good. But the man who *rebels* against him in his heart, writhes and wrestles against his external authority. The mighty forces of government, which work in favor of willing subjects, proceed in dread array against him as a rebel. How pitiable his condition!—A frail bark, struggling against all the tides that upheave and swell the great ocean of being!—a feeble worm, battling with the powers of Omnipotence ! His happiness is impossible, his ruin inevitable, until he surrenders his spirit to the dominion of Christ.

Having offered these remarks, explanatory of the distinction between the *inner* and *outer* reign of Jesus, we proceed to notice the *basis* and *extent* of his outward authority. On what is it founded ? The text answers the question. His death and resurrection. “He died, and revived.”\* There are many aspects in which we might look upon these extraordinary facts, but we must restrict ourselves to the views here presented. It is here implied that these facts occurred by Christ’s own *personal intention*. “For to this end he died.” Why did he die ? Not because of any law of mortality operating in him, nor because of the violence that was inflicted upon his person ; nor, in fact, because of any principle or power acting upon him which he was incapable of resisting ; but simply because he *purposed it*. You must

\* The expression, “and rose,” is rejected as an interpolation by the most enlightened critics. It is manifestly superfluous. The term “revived” expresses the same idea.

trace up the wondrous event to the free and intelligent determination of his own merciful mind. He willed his life away. "He came into life in order that he might die." (Heb. ii. 14.) Have you anything analogous to this in the history of our world? In the annals of God's creation, is there anything approaching it? It may be said that many men have been found *willing* to die. Some have loathed life, and would not live always, and some have had a foretaste of celestial joys, and "have desired to depart." Granted. But what was the *willingness* of these men to die? Has it any correspondence with the *willingness* of Christ? Not the slightest. Their willingness was nothing more, at most, than a desire to die *now* rather than *then*. They knew that death itself was inevitable. Their willingness did not refer to the event itself, but merely to the *period* of its occurrence. The question never rested with them to decide whether they would die or not. All that their willingness amounted to was a readiness to meet the event when it came; but the case, in relation to Christ, was vastly different. It was with him a choice to die—a purpose to endure the mysterious agonies of dissolution, whilst he might have avoided them for ever. (John x. 17, 18.)

But wherein is the moral propriety of this? Has any being a right to will the destruction of his own life? Is not existence, the property of God, always given to its possessor in trust? To die by self-resolution—what is it but suicide? And is not suicide an enormous crime? These questions are fair, and naturally springing out of the line of thought we have pursued. The reply is this:—That whilst, in the case of *any creature*, however holy and exalted, death brought about by *self-purpose*, would be a crime, in the case of Christ it is not so, because he was the *proprietor* of his own existence. He was the only being that ever walked this earth who could say, "I am my own: this body is mine—this soul is mine—this nature, with all its wondrous elements, susceptibilities, and powers, absolutely belongs to me." Jesus, in effect, did say, "My humanity is mine; I can do with it whatever I please; and I offer it, pure and holy, on the altar of eternal justice,

as an oblation for the race whose nature it is." Oh! it is this fact that separates his death immeasurably from that of any other being; that gives to it a moral energy to work out the reformation of mankind—a sacrificial virtue to atone for the sins of the world.

The language, moreover, implies that he rose, as well as died, by his own *personal purpose*. If he died from his own will, then he rose from the force of the same will; for it is said, "For to this end he both died, and revived." It is not said that he *was* revived, but that he revived. This is wonderful. There does not seem anything incongruous in the supposition of a living being dying by his own determination, but there does appear something amounting to absurdity in the notion of a dead being "reviving" by his own purpose. Where, in the cold stiff corpse, dwells the power of self-resuscitation? The stillness that has reigned unbroken over the graves of the human population, from Adam to this moment, proves that no such power exists. There is but one way of explaining this statement, so as to commend it to our judgment and credence:—Jesus was *God-man*. The *man-nature* died, and the *God-nature* revived it. Now, these two facts—the result of Christ's purpose—are the basis of his mediatorial authority. "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and am alive again, and have the keys of death and hell."

And then, as to the *extent* of this outward authority, it is said the "dead and living." The "living:" the millions that make up the generation now existing on this earth. The "dead:" the countless multitudes of every preceding generation, now existing in the great Hades of retribution. He is Lord of both.

There are a few general thoughts arising out of this subject of Christ's outward dominion, as here presented, which I would, in conclusion, seek to impress upon your hearts.

If Christ is the "Lord of the dead and the living," then *there is nothing accidental in human history*. He presides over all the acts of our being. He directs our steps. Our course is ordered by him. What are chances to us, are pur-

poses to him. Our varied changes are the developments of his immutable laws. In our ignorance, we talk of "accidental deaths" and "premature graves;" we speak about the abridgment and prolongation of life: but, in real truth, such language has no meaning; it expresses notions, not truths. Since Christ is the Lord of death, it never occurs before or after his appointment. He has the key of mortality. No grave is opened but by his hand. "Man's days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee." "Thou turnest man to destruction." "Thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass."

If Christ is the "Lord of the dead and the living," then *the departed are still in existence*. Had the apostle believed that all that remained of the dead was the dust that remained in their graves, would he have spoken of Jesus as their Lord? Assuredly not. By the word dead, he does not mean the extinct, but the departed—not the buried ashes, but the separate spirit. There have been times when the solemn question has agitated our hearts—Is there anything after death? Shall we, when we cease to breathe, cease to live? Are the men who, for six thousand years, have been carrying on the governments, trades, educations, and religions, of the world, sunk into the nothingness of annihilation? Will it be that another century will blot, for ever, out of being the eight hundred millions that now populate our globe? Blessed be God! Christianity solves our questions, and removes our doubts. It assures us that death is not the destruction of existence, but a change in its mode.

If Christ is the "Lord of the dead and the living," then *death is not the introduction to a new kingdom*. On our little earth there is a variety of empires. Some of these are so different in their laws, customs, and institutions, that a course of conduct which would be considered right and proper in the one, would be deemed the very reverse in another. The character that would be in one place admired, in a second would be denounced. Where there are so many different standards, character can never be a thing of uniform ap-

preciation. But since Christ is the Lord of both worlds, death does not introduce into a new kingdom, but into a new province. The same throne, standard, and king, there as here. What is approved of here will be approved of there ; what is right here will be right there. Does not this idea tend to disrobe death of much of its terrors to the good man ? In dissolution, he not only continues to be, but to be in the *same* empire, promoting the same interests, and worshipping at the same throne. Does it not also reconcile us to the departure of Christian friends ? Beloved spirits ! We have often wept their absence, and mourned their loss. We would now console our hearts with the thought that they are still our "fellow-citizens."

If Christ is the "Lord of the dead and the living," then *we may anticipate the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory*. Space compels us to dismiss this point. My friend, art thou living to the Lord ? If so, great are thy privileges. The Lord reigns *in* thee and *over* thee. All divine workings, within and without, are for thee. Thy history is truly divine. But if thou art not living thus—if thou art living to pleasure, to business, to sin and self—I now forewarn thee of thy fate. Remember the immortal interests thou art sacrificing, the eternal laws thou art violating, the ever-blackening doom towards which thou art hastily directing thy steps. In the midst of thy bustle and excitement, remember that there is *a time to die*. In thy imagination that time is far distant, but, in the arrangements of God, it may be just at hand. What though thou hast twenty years to live, that twenty will soon come down to ten, that ten to one, that one to a month ; that month will dwindle down to the last day, that day to the last hour, and that hour to the last minute ! Oh, that minute ! What a universe of thought will be crowded into that minute ! What strings, about to break, will vibrate through thy heart in that minute ! What eternal visions will start up to thy mind in that minute ! What deathless issues will hang on that minute ! GOD BE MERCIFUL UNTO THEE, MY FRIEND, IN THAT MINUTE !



## Gems of Thought.

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### Analysis of Homily the Thirtieth.

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."—Dan. xii. 13.

SUBJECT:—*Man's Lot in the end of Days.*

THOUGH we frequently fail to affix the right history to prophecy,\* we may always succeed in getting that which, after all, is more important—the *general* truth which it either contains or suggests. It would be well if prophetic interpreters displayed as much solicitude to develop the great truths which are the life of the world, as to rend veils, burst seals, and disclose those "times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Events belong to periods and places. Moral truths are for all ages and for all souls. Like sun, and air, and dew, they have a vital connexion with all.

There are, manifestly, stupendous events predicted in this book—events whose visions seem so to perplex and confound the prophet, that he exclaims, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" To moderate his solicitude, and calm his excited spirit, a Divine voice speaks to him, and says, "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." It is my intention to notice, with the utmost condensity, a few of the general truths, in their consecutive order, which are here suggested.

I. THAT THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY IS THE HISTORY OF GREAT EVENTS. Daniel felt thus now. We attempt no explanation, at present, of the events which are here symbolized. All we say is, that they impress us—as we think they must

\* Some of the works that have recently appeared on prophecy—especially on this book and the Apocalypse—pretending to attach historic events to predictions, are most humiliating specimens of literary vanity, flippancy, and presumption, and tend much to bring the sacred scriptures into contempt amongst thoughtful sceptics.



impress every ordinary reader—with the idea of their *greatness*. When I use the word *great* in connexion with the incidents of human history, I use it, of course, in its *relative* sense. There are events great to other beings that are not so to us. The fall of a dew-drop upon a tiny leaf is nothing to us, but is a tremendous catastrophe to its teeming insect population. On the other hand, events which are great to men, which agitate empires and shake society to its heart, may be too insignificant to wake a ripple upon the sea of angelic history. To the Infinite ONE, events, of course, are *nothing*. But there are circumstances in the history of our race which we feel to be great, inasmuch as they have exercised a mighty influence upon our character and destiny. The expulsion of our first parents from Eden; the translation of Enoch; the deluge; the call of Abraham; the giving of the law; the exodus of the Jews, and their entrance into the promised land; the erection of the temple; the mission of Christ, and the ministries of the apostles; the ecclesiastical intrigue of Constantine; the discovery of printing; the Reformation; the birth of the “inductive method;” the sanguinary enormities and the revolutionary movements of Napoleon;—these are specimens of a few of the events that are emphatically great in our history. But greater events seem yet before us. The past are but dim shadows of the future. Far off, in the after-periods, hope discovers a world of “good things to come;” and the imagination hears the resurrection trump, the crash of dissolving systems, the piercing shrieks of the *false*, and the triumphant shouts of the *true*. These events, whether they start from the free moral developments of man, or the interposition of the Eternal, or from a concurrence of both, are highly useful to our corrupt world. They break its monotony, they prevent it from sinking into the dead torpor of sin. Like the blast of eternal trumpets, they startle humanity to action and to thought.

II. THAT, IN ALL AGES, THESE EVENTS HAVE BEEN SOURCES OF PERPLEXITY TO MANKIND. Our prophet, in the context,

appears confounded. Jacob, in his adventures; Job, in his affliction; Asaph, in his thoughtful observations; and the disciples, on the ascension of their Lord; only manifested the same perplexity that thoughtful men of all generations have experienced. This perplexity arises partly from intellectual, and partly from moral, causes. So vast are these events in their extent, so complex in their nature, so remote in their origin and issues, and so intricate and interwoven in their relations and bearings, that our limited reason cannot possibly interpret them. We can only see a few links in that chain which connects the two eternities—catch a few detached sentences of that profound argument that commenced before the first man lived, and which will not be finished until the books of the last judgment have been closed. But, in addition to this *mental incapacity*, there is *moral incongruity*. Ever do we judge from comparison. We look at others through the medium of our own dispositions, and these dispositions are canons by which we interpret their conduct. It is impossible to understand the history of one with whose governing motives we have nothing in common. The conduct of the truly disinterested must ever be an insoluble enigma to the really selfish. Hence Jesus was not known by his age, nor were the apostles. “The world,” said they, “knoweth us not.” Hence, too, the world changes its judgment of certain men as it changes its own moral sympathies, and thus the martyrs of one age become the heroes of another. This, then, is another and a chief cause of our perplexity amidst God’s operations. Our want of moral sympathy with him enwraps his throne in “clouds and darkness.” Had we that *love* which is the sovereign element in the Divine character—that “motion from the Holy One”—we should “know all things”—have a spiritual insight into the spring of all—the heart of God.

III. THAT THERE WILL COME A PERIOD WHEN ALL THESE EVENTS WILL MEET IN A SOLEMN CRISIS. “The end of the days.” Scripture abounds with references to this period. The 25th chapter of Matthew may be taken as a specimen of

its revelations, touching the *principle*, *process*, and *phenomena*, of that stupendous juncture towards which the history of our world is tending. Independent of biblical testimony, however, there are other considerations which urge us to a faith in this coming catastrophe. There are the *universal forebodings of humanity*. Before the eye of every conscience there has flitted, with more or less distinctness, the terrible scene of some final day. In all ages and lands, human souls have seen within dim visions, and heard within inarticulate prophecies of this period. As the dark side of the pillar which turned on the Egyptians, and enfolded them in gloom as they rushed into the Red Sea, foretold them of the retribution that was just at hand, so these native apprehendings of universal man foreshadow this on-coming crisis. Again; there are our *moral reasonings*. The notions of justice which we have within us—whether inbred or imparted it matters not—force us to believe that this world will not always go on developing contradictions in the conditions of men. If innocence is ever to suffer and virtue to be oppressed, whilst depravity luxuriates and wickedness reigns; if the most sacred rights of humanity, and the sublimest truths of God, are always to be prostituted to the contemptible ends of filthy lucre and vain ambition, then I confess that I discover not that justice of the great Ruler which is indispensable to awake my reverence, win my confidence, and enlist my heart. It seems to me that religion stands or falls with a belief in this crisis. If it come not, I see no justice in God. If I see no justice in him, I cannot love him; and, if I love him not, I have no religion, for religion is love. Moreover, there is *analogy*. All things here seem to have their ultimate crisis. The seed deposited in the soil passes from stage to stage until it reaches a certain point, and then decays. So with animal life; so, history shows, with human institutions; and so, science shows, with the physical globe itself. Yes, my brother, all these considerations, combined with scripture testimony, assure us that “the end of days” will come; when all the earnest thoughts that good men of every age scattered over the great field of

humanity, shall reach its harvest state ; when all the events of time, which, like streams, have burst from a thousand hills, and, swollen into a stupendous river by the concurrent events of mighty ages, shall reach the shore, touch the wave, and be absorbed in the great ocean of eternity ; when all the bright epochs of time, which, like stars, have been glimmering out their pale and chilly rays from the benighted firmament of the race, shall be lost in the refulgence of a sun that shall rise to set no more. Time is "an isthmus between two eternities ;" and ever is the surrounding ocean making on it fresh incursions. Fragment after fragment its sweeping surges bear away, and, in the end of days, it shall be engulfed and lost for ever.

IV. THAT, AT THIS SOLEMN CRISIS, THE GOOD MAN WILL APPEAR IN HIS OWN PERSON, AND HIS APPROPRIATE POSITION. "Thou shalt stand in thy lot." First. *He will appear in his own person.* Thou, Daniel, the very same being whose soul is now perplexed with my government, shalt stand. Of all existences on this earth, spiritual existence alone retains its *identity*. The great law of physical change is constantly transforming vegetable into animal life, and the animal into the vegetable again. These two systems of existences are ever passing and repassing into each other. Not so with SOULS. Amidst the revolutions of centuries they retain their identity. No soul is absorbed in another, nor is any absorbed in God. I shall not only ever be, but ever be *myself*, after ages have swept over my grave, and the day of judgment be as far behind me as the creation of Adam is now. I "shall stand" somewhere in the universe, in the full consciousness of my identity, feeling that I am the same being that I was when a child in my parents' home, or a man in the busy scenes of earthly life. Secondly. *He will appear in his appropriate position.* The word "lot" here probably refers to the division of Canaan amongst the twelve tribes. Each tribe had his lot, or his portion. The proper lot of a being is that sphere of life whose circumstances are congruous with his moral charac-

ter, constitutional tendencies, and intellectual powers. Were we unacquainted with the real facts of the case, we should always infer a man's character and power from his circumstances. In travelling through a strange country, whenever we beheld a magnificent mansion, located in one of "nature's choicest spots," we should conclude that it was the home of some great saint and sage; and, on the other hand, wherever we descried some miserable hovel, we should infer that it was the cell of some vile imp or fool. Facts, however, contradict what would be our antecedent conclusions. Man here has not his lot—is not here found in "his own place:" but in the coming crisis it will be so; each will have his lot—his outward circumstances corresponding with the character and capacity of his inner self. Thirdly. *His appropriate position will be one of rest.* "Thou shalt rest." This rest will not be that of *unconsciousness* or *inaction*, but a rest from intellectual anxiety, worldly toil, spiritual conflict, and general suffering.

My brother, art thou perplexed with the ways of God? Are things occurring which clash with thy most fundamental deas of justice? Are there problems of mighty import pressing on thine anxious soul? Do the visions unfolded to thy mind cause thee, at times, to exclaim with our prophet, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" I say to thee, thou anxious spirit, Go thou thy way "through the straight, though often rugged, way of duty; move on with a firm and confiding step, till the end be." There is an end, my brother. The darkening cloud will not always spread over thy head its gloomy shadow, nor will the confounding whirlwind always bewilder thee on thy path. "Go thou thy way till the end," and thou shalt *rest*—rest in holy faith and love, and "stand in thy lot at the end of days"—have a position that will give scope to thy every power, meet thine every want, and rise superior to thy highest aspiration and wish!

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## Analysis of *Homily the Thirty-first.*

“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”—  
1 Pet. iii. 19.

SUBJECT:—*Spirits in Prison.*

THERE are four interpretations of this passage. The first regards “the spirits in prison” as referring to the Gentiles, whose souls were in the bondage of pagan vices, and to whom Christ, by his apostles, actually preached; the second, as referring to the *redeemed* residents of Hades, the “paradise” into which he entered with the dying thief, immediately after he expired on the cross; the third, as referring to souls in hell, whom Christ actually visited and preached to after his crucifixion; and the fourth, as referring to those antediluvians to whom Christ preached by Noah, during their existence on this earth, but whose spirits were *now*, when Peter wrote, shut up in the prison of hell. We adopt the last interpretation for reasons that are satisfactory to our own mind; but as space will not allow us to examine each, a mere statement of the reasons of our preference could scarcely be appreciated. We must therefore assume that our idea is the correct one, and request the reader to pursue the critical investigation for himself. Accepting this interpretation, the text authorizes us to infer three facts of overwhelming solemnity.

I. *That there are human spirits actually in the prison of hell.* First. *A prison is a scene of darkness.* The light is studiously shut out of prisons. Only so much is allowed to glimmer through the narrow grating of massive iron as to make the “darkness visible” and felt. *Impurity, remorse, despair,* constitute “the blackness of darkness for ever.” Secondly. *A prison is a scene of guilt:* it is the residence of those depraved ones whom law has pronounced unfit for the blessings of liberty. Gehenna is the receptacle for the moral refuse of the universe. Thirdly. *A prison is a scene of bondage.* Walls thick and high, and doors, windows, and chains of



iron, confine the miserable culprit. Thirdly. *A prison is a scene of thoughtfulness.* Men that have thought in the open fields, and under the bright sky of suggestive nature, have been roused to the most deep and anxious thinking in the prison. Hell is a dark realm of *thinkers*. But there are two features connected with hell that distinguish it from all the prisons on earth. First. *It is self-erected.* Each prisoner constructs his own prison—stone by stone rears its walls, and link by link forges its chains. Each prisoner is in “his own place.” Secondly. *It is spiritual.* The spirit is in prison. Earthly prisons cannot confine the soul. Paul and Silas rose on the triumphant wing of freedom, while their bodies were incarcerated in iron. No wells can confine, no chains can bind, a soul. But if the soul is bound, the man is bound. The “chains of darkness” that bind spirits is wrought of depraved dispositions and evil habits.

II. *That there are human spirits who have been in the prison of hell for centuries.* Christ preached to them, by Noah, when on earth. Peter speaks of them now as being in hell. What period of time has elapsed between Noah’s preaching and Peter’s writing? TWENTY-FOUR CENTURIES. All that time they have been in hell. Twenty-four centuries is a long time anyhow, in any mood of mind; but twenty-four centuries of *suffering* is much longer, for time is long or short according to *feeling*. An age on earth is but an hour in heaven, and an hour on earth is an age in hell. We talk of *eternal* punishment. I know not what eternity means. In the idea of twenty-four centuries of agony, I am confounded and lost. This lengthened suffering, however, impresses me with two considerations:—first, *the fearful enormity of evil*; and, secondly, *man’s capacity for endurance*. Disease soon breaks up the body; time withers the patriarchal oak, crumbles the marble; and “the waters wear away the stones” of the mightiest rocks; but, through ages of agony, the soul lives on!

III. *That there are human spirits, who have been in the prison of hell for centuries, to whom the gospel was once preached.* Christ was “in the world” before his incarnation. “He was set up from everlasting,” &c. He preached to the first generations through the ministries of his servants. He spoke to them through the sacrifice of Abel, the translation of Enoch, and the naval architecture of Noah. Every holy ministry on earth is the ministry of Christ. He is at once its inspiration and its theme. Amidst the hills and valleys of the old world, “wisdom cried, and understanding put forth her voice.”

The fact that there are spirits in hell to whom the gospel was once preached suggests two very solemn considerations:—First. *That there is no necessary connexion between hearing the gospel and salvation.* “He that heareth my words, and doeth them not,” &c. Secondly. *That the final misery of those who have heard the gospel must be contrary both to the disposition and agency of Christ.*

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#### Analysis of Homily the Thirty-second.

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person,” &c.—Heb. xii. 16, 17.

SUBJECT:—*Esau ; or, the Relation of Animal Appetites to Spiritual Prerogatives.*

THERE are three classes of sentient life :—first, those which have animal appetites, and no spiritual prerogatives—such are the beasts of the field, &c. ; secondly, those which have spiritual prerogatives, and no animal appetites—such, probably, are angels ; and, thirdly, those that are compounded of both—such are men. In men, those two kinds of power occupy two very different relations ; in some—the mass—the *animal* is the sovereign ; in others—the few—the *spiritual* guides and governs all. The incident before us teaches three truths concerning these two powers in our common nature :—

I. *That animal appetites often come into collision with spiritual prerogatives.* Esau had certain peculiar rights as the eldest son, such as a special connexion with God, a double portion of the inheritance, and a right to govern the family. These his appetites opposed.

Every man has certain great prerogatives or rights, which belong to him as an intelligent moral being. (1) *Spiritual independency is a native right.* By this I mean a power to subordinate all inward impulses, and outward circumstances, to the increase of its knowledge, the growth of its virtue, the unfolding of its faculties, and the centering of itself in God. (2) *Moral approbation is a native right.* Man was made to receive the "well-done" of his conscience, and thus enjoy the inward peace that "passeth all understanding." (3) *Divine fellowship is a native right.* He is made to have *free access* to the everlasting Father. But against these appetite is constantly *warring*. This warfare is our discipline: our work is to keep under our body.

II. *That animal appetites often lead to the sacrifice of spiritual prerogatives.* For "one morsel of meat" Esau bartered all away. This was the ruin of the first man, and has been the ruin of most ever since. Men are constantly selling their *minds* for *meat*—their spiritual prerogatives for animal pleasures—their souls for sovereigns. (1) *This is foolish*; first, because the wants of the soul survive the appetites of the body; and, secondly, because the well-being of man depends upon the possession and cultivation of his spiritual prerogatives. (2) *This is criminal.* It is an infraction upon the design and constitution of our nature. God has given to each a sufficient amount of spiritual energy to control animal passion. *As a rule, wherever we find strong physical appetites, we find a correspondent constitutional energy of mind.*

III. *That animal appetites, when they lead to the sacrifice of spiritual prerogatives, reduce man to the utmost distress.*

“For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears.” (1) *His sorrow was deep.* (Gen. xxvii. 34—38.) But his loss was not so great as the loss of those who live and die “after the flesh.” (2) *His sorrow was fruitless.* There comes a time when sacrificed spiritual prerogatives can never be redeemed.

Take care, my friend, of thy spiritual birthright. Sell not thy spiritual freedom and rectitude for the choicest fruits of Eden. Do not barter away thy moral rights for earthly riches, nor sacrifice thy soul to the senses. Let thy conscience be the pilot of thy bark. Let it stand firm at the helm, and guide thee on through the heaving surges of passion, and the storm of outward circumstances, to the haven of everlasting joy.

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Analysis of Homily the Thirty-third.

“Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”—Rev. xxii. 20.

SUBJECT :—*Man hailing the Judgment.*

THERE are four states of mind amongst men in relation to the last day. Some are indifferent to it, as were the antediluvians in relation to the deluge; some scornfully deny it, as did the infidels in the days of Peter; some horror-stricken at it, as were the demoniacs in the time of Christ; and some welcome it, as John did now. Three things implied in this last state of mind—

I. *A conviction that such a day will dawn.*

II. *A conviction of a preparedness to enter on the trial.*

III. *A conviction that the results of that day will be fraught with personal good.*







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